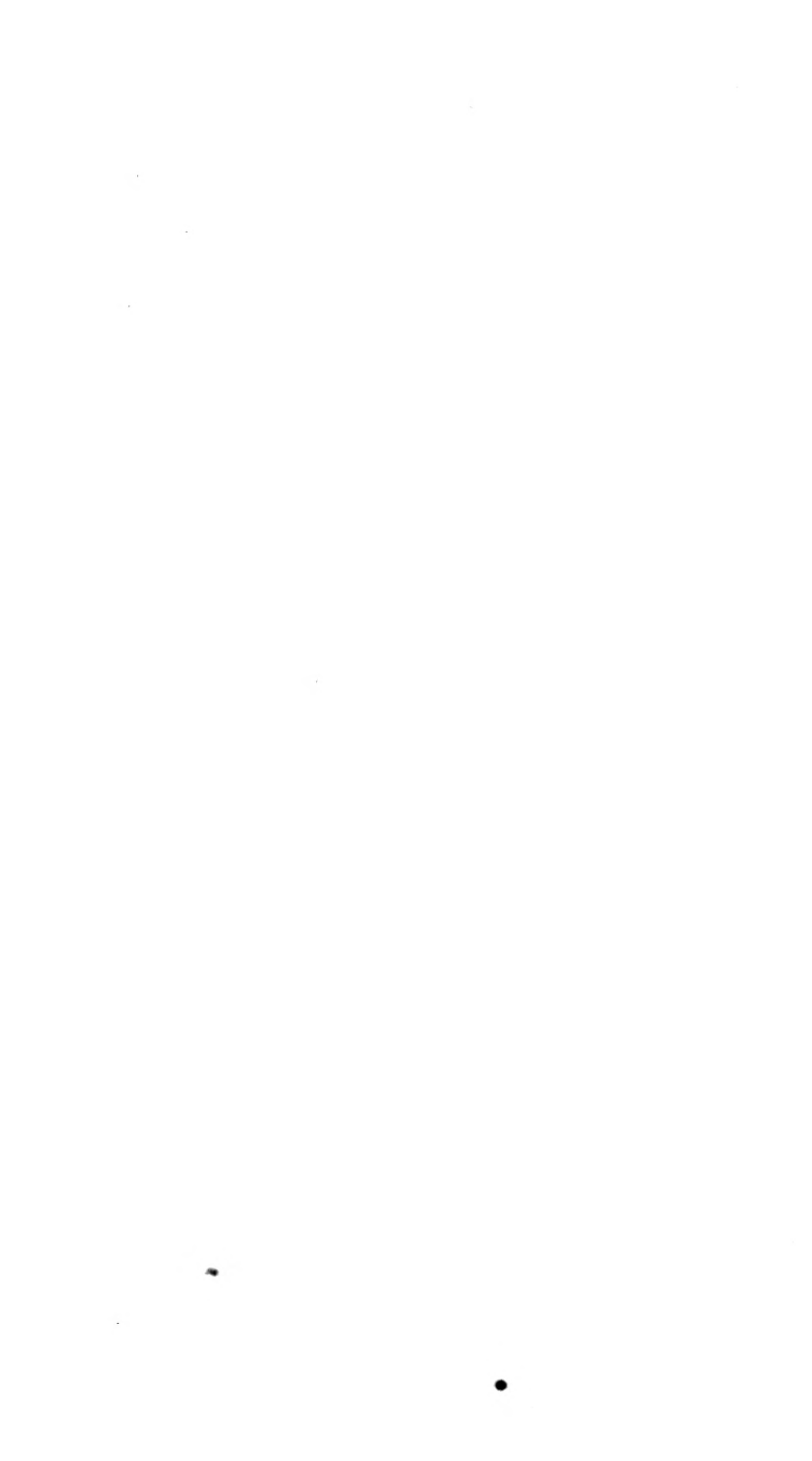


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DUTIES

OF

MASTERS TO SERVANTS:

THREE PREMIUM ESSAYS.

- I. BY THE REV. H. N. [✓]McTYEIRE.
II. BY THE REV. C. F. STURGIS.
III. BY THE REV. A. T. HOLMES.
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NOTE.

IN 1849, the Baptist State Convention of Alabama offered a premium of \$200 for the best Essay on the Duties of Christian Masters to their Servants ; and assigned the duty of making the award to a committee selected from the leading religious denominations of the Southern and South-western States. The award, as suggested by the committee, was confirmed at the meeting of the Convention in 1850 ; and three essays are, accordingly, selected for publication. The Rev. H. N. McTyeire, of New-Orleans, is the author of the essay signed "Crescent;" the Rev. C. F. Sturgis, of Greensborough, Ala., is the author of the Melville letters ; and the Rev. A. T. Holmes, of Hayneville, Houston Co., Ga., is the author of the essay signed "Ryland Fuller."

It is proper to state that the Committee of Award, the Convention, and their Committee of Publication, have, alike, abstained from any such censorship of these essays as to make themselves, or any of them, responsible for the accuracy of the definitions or statements used by the writers respectively. The parties, above referred to, have deemed it sufficient that these essays were adjudged to be the best presented to them, and that they contain matter worthy of the profound and prayerful consideration of the owners of slaves. The authors of the essays, severally, are entitled to all the honor, and will sustain all the responsibility, which may belong to them.

Charleston, S. C., 1851.



P R E F A C E .

By *Masters* the writer understands the owners of servants in distinction from those who hire or oversee them. The former, having the legal control and disposition of their servants, are regarded as responsible for their treatment—a responsibility very onerous, and only transferable with ownership.

By *Servants* is understood that class of laborers at present obtaining under the domestic institutions of the Southern States ; to whom, if to any upon the earth, the numerous precepts of the Bible are addressed under that name.

The advantage of addressing Christian masters is duly appreciated. A word to them, upon divine authority, will be a sufficient reason. The relation subsisting between them and other human beings having been distinctly recognized in the Holy Scriptures, the duties growing out of it remain not to be derived and enforced by argument. Many and plain precepts have been directed to them, and it is expected that they will abide by their application. It is hoped, however, that much of this essay will receive attention from those not professedly Christians ; for not only do they make up a large proportion of masters, but it must be confessed that, in numerous instances, they have manifested a disposition to ameliorate the physical, social and religious condition of their servants quite in advance of some professedly Christians.

The writer would add a few words in reference to himself ; inasmuch as, on account of the agitations on this delicate subject, all persons may not be considered at liberty to treat it. He is by birth a South-Carolinian ; and by education and sympathy has never been less a Southerner than that nativity calls for. His father is a cotton planter and a slaveholder : and that he is not

the same, is owing to those circumstances and high necessities that control our lives beyond and often contrary to all previous plans. Whether it be considered discreditable or not, the writer deems it by no means a disqualification for the task he has undertaken that much of his time, in one capacity or other, has been spent on plantations and among servants. The matter he treats has passed before his eyes, in all the phases of true life, and is not now, for the first time, looked upon by him in the light of Scripture teachings. Having never resided north of Mason and Dixon's line, he has not learned to hate the master or condemn the servant. All his associations, from infancy up, have secured for both of them the kindest feelings of his heart ; and he rejoices at this opportunity of promoting their mutual welfare by the expression of sentiments that are the result of his best observations and reflections.

MASTER AND SERVANT.

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BY THE REV. H. N. McTYEIRE,  
OF NEW-ORLEANS.  
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THE word Master and its correlative Servant, express a peculiar relation; one that cannot be expressed by neighbor, any more than by husband and wife, or parent and child. These are all different relations, and imply distinct obligations as they do distinct facts.

The exhortations and instructions of the New Testament, addressed to various classes and conditions, may be reduced to something like the following order:—duties of Christians as neighbors and members of society; as husbands and wives; as parents and children; as masters and servants. The relation of husband and wife, being *sui generis*, is happily used to illustrate the connection between Christ and His Church—its subjection to and unity with Him as its Head. For the same reason that of master and servant is more than once used to illustrate the relation of all the inhabitants of the world to God, the Creator and Ruler; “knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.”*

The Bible puts it beyond question that a master stands, to his bond-servant, one bought with his money,

*Colossians, iv : 1. Ephesians, vi : 9. Luke xvii : 10

or born in his house, as he does not to the hired servant or stranger within his gates, or the neighbor without them. He has, therefore, feelings to cultivate and a part to perform toward him which he will do well to inquire into. It is not enough that enlarged and general views of the human family be entertained in order to understanding what our duty is to them that are about us. Our particular relations to them must be studied in that specific manner the Apostles have pointed out, before the various and interesting classes of duties that each devolves upon us, can be felt. One may be a good neighbor and yet at fault as a husband or father; or he may be a good husband, a good father, and yet a bad master.

The duties a master owes to his servant are as binding upon the conscience as those the servant owes to the master: neither can be neglected without sin. Indeed as far as they go, though of a different kind, they are as binding as any the master may owe to any other human creature. Obligations to those of lower condition appeal powerfully to a magnanimous spirit; they are the last it will dispute or fail to fulfil. In such a case, the debtor is also constituted *guardian*. If the servant is defrauded of his own and hardly dealt with; if his wants are not regarded or his grievances redressed, to whom can he complain? His misery is voiceless. His only earthly appeal lies to him who has permitted or done these things—his master. To him is he commanded to submit himself, even under wrongs. Escape is forbidden him, or even so much as “answering again.” His master

is his sole protector. With him everything is reposed upon this security, that *his* Master also is in heaven, with whom there is no respect of persons. And is not this ample security for the conduct of every Christian, every God-fearing man that is a master upon earth !

The writer is aware, even to oppression and embarrassment, of the vast number of his fellow beings whose condition may be *directly* reached and happily affected by a successful address, on this subject, to Masters. It should not be forgotten that his remarks are made to only *one of the parties concerned*. If, therefore, he shall often be found sympathizing rather with the other, he trusts those he addresses will allow him large freedom, and take this as his apology.

DUTIES OF MASTERS TO SERVANTS CONSIDERED IN THEIR
LOWEST SENSE—AS PROPERTY ONLY : DUTIES INDICATED
BY POLICY NO LESS THAN HUMANITY.

Servants should be judiciously worked:—There is an excess of physical exertion, both in man and beast, which the constitution cannot bear. The effect may not be immediately visible, but in some shape or other, at some time, it will manifest itself. The laws of nature cannot be sinned against with impunity. Long after the date of its violence, it may be, the disordered system will complain and in various ways give unmistakeable evidence that it has been violated. There will be peculiar liability to infirmities. Many disabilities, if not incurable diseases, will be superinduced and premature old

age comes on. Thus for a present advantage, a trifling gain, the usefulness and, what is more, the comfort of the future is sacrificed. For the reckless industry of a day, life is shortened by years. Too great eagerness for the profit of soft and newly grown muscles pays the penalty of an early superannuation.

It matters not, as to real injury and depreciation of property, whether this overstraining be procured through force or persuasion. A spirited horse, without the application of whip or spur, may be kept at such a speed or draught as shall very soon render him valueless. This natural measure of exertion should be carefully guarded by every master. If his servants be coaxed or bribed to go beyond it, it is bad policy—if driven, it is cruelty. While exposure to inclement weather and inequality of strength to the assigned task have much to do with the proportion between physical exhaustion and the amount of work performed, the *quality of tools* fully as much affects that proportion. A dull iron or an ill shaped helve causes the outlay of much needless strength; and as that strength is human, it ought not be wasted. The achievements of science in labor-saving machinery are no less gratifying to the philanthropist than the mere economist. Toil is no more such a drudgery. Labor is lightened by a thousand simple and cheap arts, and the laborer should have the benefit of the newest and best improvements in his line, just as the traveller rejoices in the ease of the patent spring or the speed of the locomotive. Man is aided in his work by natural instruments; or that work is accommodated to his structure;

his posture is relieved, his muscles are not so taxed nor his frame of flesh worn down. This amelioration of toil must be contemplated with greater satisfaction, in many items of it, than its increased productiveness. Masters should secure to their servants all these advantages. He who has the same work to do as another and is provided with only half his facilities for it, has in fact twice his labor to perform.

Servants should be allowed wholesome rest:—It is a fixed fact that not less than seven hours in every twenty-four ought to be spent in sleep, by a laboring man. If active occupations are pushed beyond these limits, it is at the expense of health and life. The complete restoration of the muscular and nervous systems requires not less time, and they cannot be soundly maintained without it, whatever habits to the contrary may have been formed. Does a master ever ask himself, when his servants rise up at the morning summons and go out to the field, or to feeding stock, or to attend his household affairs, whether his arrangements permitted them to retire early enough the night before to have slept these seven hours?

Something more is meant by *rest* than sleep. There is a waking repose, call it leisure if you please, necessary to man; so necessary that, sweet as is sleep to him, he will, for this, trench upon the time allotted to it. Who in this world of scenes and enjoyments can consent to take all his rest with his eyes shut? Who finds the conditions of his comfort so punctiliously cared for by others that, when released from their employment, he has no business of his own to do, no taste of his own to

consult? It is thought by many that our colored population can make out with less sleep than white persons; but there is nothing in the difference of their constitutions to warrant this opinion. They often do with less sleep and live, yet it is a question how much less of life they enjoy on account of this deprivation. They are proverbially wakeful by night; this is already accounted for—they must attend to those matters for which others take the day. They are also proverbially sleepy by day; this is not solely the result of mental inactivity—it is rather the effort of wronged nature to right herself.

The ox is unyoked, the horse is stabled; their day's work is done. Without interruption they rest till another day. Not so, always, with the weary servant that toiled with both. He is convenient to demands, and many an extra job is got out of him before he rests. The servants of some masters may watch the shadows with hope. Their turning and lengthening are indications of periods of repose almost sacredly respected. Not so with others. Their servants' lot seems to be one if not of interminable, at least of unreasonably protracted employment. If they are not constantly employed, they are liable to be. The limits of labor and rest are not prescribed with any definiteness. Some masters fall into this practice without consideration and for the *want of it*. No formal complaint is made; the habit is easily glided into and the servants themselves, familiar with the usage, are unconscious of the hardship. Thus the grievous abuse continues. Others, however, adopt it by plan and of set purpose. Many things are laid off to be

done when the task is finished and a full day's work put in. And what is accomplished in this way is looked on as so much clear gain. But will a Christian man, will a man of nice sense of justice, consent to be enriched by such gains? Verily, there is an insidious temptation to trespass in this thing. Masters should summon principle to their aid and resolutely, conscientiously, fix bounds to these encroachments of convenience and cupidity.

A master who owns few servants and works with them himself, is apt to fall upon a specious excuse for this overreaching. He carries his row in the field or turns off his job in the shop with them. He puts no more on them than he takes upon himself. Nay, more; he has a harder time of it than they. His rest is shorter, his exertion greater and more continuous, and his fare no better than theirs. Is it not enough for the servant that the master is side by side with him? But such reasoning is unfair. The question might well be raised whether the master is not sinning against himself in thus hasting to be rich. If so, he has no right to propose his intemperate labor as a criterion for others. Moreover, this labor is for *him*. The gains of this excess of industry are to make *him* rich. He is stimulated by an interest more impulsive than any the servant can feel. This sustains and cheers, actually strengthens him for enduring that which to his lowly companion is killing drudgery. So, the cases are not equal. What is the servant bettered by the additional bale of cotton or hogshead of tobacco extorted from exhausted nature; only that next

year he shall have more companions in the field, and the field be enlarged.

The rest of the Sabbath has been expressly commanded by the Almighty for the man-servant and the maid-servant, and that upon the same grounds, and in the same sentence with the master himself.* It is taken for granted, therefore, that every Christian master will not only leave his servants at liberty to keep the Sabbath, but, in the fear of God, promote their Sabbath-keeping. He is largely responsible for their violations of this holy day. A neglect of the Scriptural injunction and *precaution*—"REMEMBER the Sabbath day to keep it holy," often leaves much work for it, that might have been previously disposed of. It should be *remembered* as coming on, and prepared for beforehand.

A minister of extensive and excellent reputation in his day, and a rigid Sabbatarian, has left the following memoir:—"Not long since I spent the close of the week with an old and respectable member of the church. In the morning almost the first sound that reached my ears was the axe. I reasoned with my kind friend on the impropriety and awful consequences of such conduct. He frankly acknowledged his faults; but alleged that his servants were to blame—he could not control them—it was an express violation of his orders. As he could not prevent it, he supposed he was innocent himself. 'Do you think,' said I, 'if there was a fine of ten dollars only for cutting wood on the Sabbath day, that

*Exodus xx: 8, 9, 10, 11.

those ungovernable servants would be guilty of a violation of that law and compel you to pay the ten dollars every week?" He confessed that he believed it would not be the case." Now, who does not see that this work, though an express violation of the master's own orders, was made indispensable by him—as fire is indispensable. By deferring it till Sabbath it had to be done on Sabbath. A few hours of *his own time* devoted to it on Saturday, and his servant would not have been thus robbed of his rest, the day of its sanctity, and God of his honor.

Notwithstanding, in every household there are certain servile offices not so easily disposed of. It is impossible to do them beforehand, difficult to dispense with them, and equally so to distribute them impartially and mercifully. Study, joined with an honest desire after uprightness, will alone enable the master in these things to do unto his servants "that which is just and equal."* It is not beneath the dignity of this essay to mention two humble characters especially :—*the cook and the carriage driver*. These are but two, it may be, in each household; yet when all the households are taken together of which they form a part, a vast multitude of human beings is made up which no man may feel ashamed to plead for.

What is the day of rest to them, more than any other pay? To the former, perhaps, an occasion of closer confinement, of more intense roasting and burning than any other of the seven. Our present business is not about

*Colossians, iv : 1.

scarce or sumptuous eating on Sundays, hot dinners or cold dinners, only so far as the servant is concerned. Our point is made on labor and rest, not on luxuries.

The family carriage is drawn out in the morning for church. If in the country, the place of religious assembly may be distant several miles. The driver, having groomed and harnessed his horses and burnished the silver mountings, is on the box and away. Of the sermon and services he gets little benefit, if any. When he returns, the best part of the day has been spent—spent for another. He has had no companionship, no church privilege, no rest. In many instances this is the plain history of the matter, *year after year*. In ordinary employment no difference is made between him and others; there is no attempt at interchange or commutation. Let Christian masters think on these things. Is it not their pressing duty to devise some scheme of remedy or adjustment? None is here intruded upon them. The evil is stated, and with them it lies to correct it or let it go on so.

Servants should be well clothed:—Respect for their own persons, their families and visitors, will insure this in those that masters keep about them. It is an acknowledged offence, and certainly no small one, against decency and politeness, to be offered even a glass of water, from the hand of a filthy domestic. And, as to clothing their servants generally, not much blame attaches to masters; to many, none at all. The immense quantity and the substantial quality of negro clothing sold periodically by our merchants is a speaking statis-

tic on this subject; one speaking favorably. The improvements in the manufacture of cotton, wool and leather, have been a blessing to servants, most perceptibly. Added to this, our Southern latitude renders much clothing, for the most part of the year, unnecessary for comfort. As Solomon would have the husband of the virtuous woman and good housewife known by his apparel, when he is seen in the gates, so by the external appearance of their dependents may good and thrifty proprietors be known. There prevails a slight emulation of this sort which ought to be fostered.

There *are* masters in the land whom it will behoove to inquire of themselves if they are not lacking in this duty. Do they regularly and sufficiently supply their servants—if not, there is no excuse. Let them survey their ranks, compare their attire with those of more generous neighbors:—perhaps they will be conscious of shame. Is there no foot unshod when frost is on the ground—no head uncovered from the weather, or no body imperfectly clad when they themselves, with far less exposure, find all the appliances of the season necessary for their comfort?

From their color and tropical habitudes, our colored population are liable to suffer peculiarly from cold. Their health and comfort require that they be well protected. It is not an uncommon or unpleasant spectacle to see them half-stripped and basking in the genial rays of their native sun; but a shivering servant is a shame to any master.

Besides the coarse fabrics for working use, it is a com-

mendable custom of some masters to furnish occasionally a Sunday or holiday change. This keeps alive among servants a proper self-respect, and promotes those associations that contribute to their moral improvement, and from which they would otherwise refrain. It takes but little in this way to diffuse a very general gladness over a household or plantation.

Servants should be well fed:—Not on Botany Bay provisions, stale and tainted, unless under convict punishment; not stintedly, unless upon diet—but wholesome and sound, and of this sort enough. Where they are required to cook their own victuals, facilities ought to be afforded them for doing it to the best advantage. Cooking has much to do with how far a given quantity of raw material will go. All its alimential properties may be saved and used, or a large part of them thrown away in the process. The best virtues of a piece of meat may be wasted upon a coal or spit, and what would, with skill and economy in its preparation, suffice for two men, will hardly satisfy the hunger of one. A great chemist once announced to the world a method by which people could subsist on one-third of their usual allowance—cook it with threefold more care and chew it three times as much. In many a cabin, the chief article in the kitchen inventory is a worn out corn-field hoe. With this, turned up on its edge, the cake is baked; hence the widely prevalent name of that simplest edible form of Indian meal—the hoe-cake.

Man is an animal that must take his food leisurely: to enjoy it, it must be brought into contact with the

nerves of taste ; to be benefited by it, it must, before reaching the stomach, be rendered thoroughly digestible. Meal time is one of rest as well as refreshment to the servant, and this makes him habitually a slow eater. It should be so ; for eating in a heat, masticating imperfectly, and bolting down food hurriedly, then rising up to exercise immediately, are conditions most unfavorable to digestion.

The quantity of food meted out should not be determined by what the master requires for himself. Exercise, open air and other causes, conspire to make the servant the heartier eater. One that takes note how often his own plate has been replenished during a single meal, is tempted sometimes to suppose, seeing the portion sent out to servants, that their *stealage* is calculated upon to make up the complement. No marvel that they are notorious for dishonesty ; and their dishonesty commonly begins here. Feeble moral restraints are not likely to stand before the cravings of appetite, painfully whetted by the presence of its object ; and when once they are broken over, security for character is lost. Temptation, as far as possible, should be removed from them by liberality. There is among all servants a sophistry before which their scruples stand a poor chance, and from an early age they are expert in it :—" They have worked for what is their master's and made it, and have a right to share in it ; if he does not help them, they may justifiably help themselves ; they are not stealing, only taking of their own." Equally false, but not half so specious, is the

reasoning of the Christian master who justifies himself in withholding what is meet.

Variety in food is healthy as it is pleasant. It keeps up the chemistry of the system. The servant should have an honest interest in the forward roasting ears, the ripe fruit, the melons, potatoes, and fat stock. Even Adam, with the liberty of every tree but one, transgressed ; what can be expected of his fallen descendants with more wants and less liberty ? Can a door or a fence, under these circumstances, protect the eighth commandment ? Little knowledge of human nature will teach us that theft must be the besetting sin of those so situated. How often do we hear it—who can find an honest servant ? The reply is—who tries to keep one honest ? Housewives observe the rule to let the cook have a taste of all her dishes : so should laborers partake of their harvest, and their enjoyments be identified with their success. Thus, there grows up a strict and mutual surveillance over the common interest. An offender is ferretted out sharply and a mean deed exposed. They will obey, and wait for that portion which they are assured will be theirs, by the master's own grant. His interest is their interest. It is *our* cow, *our* horse, *our* hog, *our* field.

When the Fourth of July comes or the crop is laid by, why not have a jubilee ? Scenes the fullest of true-hearted merriment the writer ever witnessed, were of this sort. A beef or mutton or porker is slaughtered. Near the spring, under the shade, is the barbecue. Fresh and abundant home-grown vegetables and fruits complete

the feast. Cool water supplies the place of stronger drink. Rough and capital jokes are cracked on the fight and victory over General Green (the grass); master's health and the country's good are toasted, and the joyous laugh goes round. One such scene would be to any one a refutation of all the preambles, resolutions, reports and speeches made for a whole year in Abolition halls.

Every master should be able to contemplate the *physique* of his servants with mingled emotions of pride and pleasure. Their looks reflect his character. A more heart-sickening, revolting spectacle is not to be found, than a parcel of overworked, meanly fed, meanly clad servants. Starved, jaded, spiritless; no heart to laugh or sing, and even without that attachment to their owner which the well kept ox and ass have for theirs. It is not surprising that slavery agitators, falling upon such isolated cases and representing them as general, have excited disgust and indignation abroad.

The master of such servants ought to be presented by his neighbors as a nuisance. He sins against the institution, and brings unmerited reproach upon all connected with it. The writer was once in a company of planters when, allusion being made to the miserly management of one of their profession, a generous master present said: "I'll warrant, without having been there, I can tell how *all live things* look on that man's plantation. His mules are poor and rubbed; they wear rope bridles, and in summer time the gear is tied on with bark hamestrings. His negroes' shins are mangy and their faces dry and crusty, as though no grease had been about their mouths

in a long while: their hair is kinked into long, hard knots—and no pig on those premises has a curl in his tail.”

Servants should be well housed:—It is a common remark of tourists that the location, construction and arrangement of dwelling houses in reference to appearance, health and comfort, is very little regarded at the South. The direction of prevailing winds, the relative position of swamps, and the facilities of ventilation, do not give a rule in settling these important items. A shade tree perhaps, determines the locality. Wood and brick are thrown into a pile, into which doors and windows are cut at random. Human beings take up their abode there and families are reared. Proper hygienic regulations, to say nothing of architectural taste, would remove many costly residences or modify their structure. When London was burned down in 1666, it proved a signal blessing. The old style buildings were thus put out of the way, and the city was rebuilt on a new style, under the direction of Sir Christopher Wren, who proved himself the benefactor of the metropolis and kingdom by introducing certain improvements, promotive of healthful exposure and a free circulation of air;—improvements that were simple and cost nothing but suggestion. The mortality of London fell off as though it had changed its latitude and climate. The plague has never since visited it; a visitation escaped, in the opinion of scientific men, by attention to a few, plain and common sense principles of architecture.

Such, too frequently, being the facts about the habita-

tions of the whites, those of the blacks cannot be better. A glance at the servants' quarter, in town or country, will leave no one in doubt why, when pestilence prevails, it is so fatal to this population. The wonder only is that they do not oftener suffer a pestilence ; fortunately, not much of their time is passed in these pent up and noisome abodes. A large proportion of human diseases is bred in human habitations. When vegetable matter, heat and moisture combine, there must be present febrile miasma. Bearing this in view, if many masters would survey their servants' cabins, they would immediately go to work, pulling down the old and putting up new ones. It would be a saving in the end. It would soon be saved out of doctors' bills and the sick list. When cholera rages, whitewash is brought into requisition and sanitary regulations established. Why cease to enforce them when the panic subsides ? These same causes, of easy prevention, do always, more or less, work sickness and death.

There are sections in the South where servants are allowed to build their own houses. As this is done at spare times, with poor materials, and, in a majority of cases, without the ability to use any tool more complex than the club-axe, of course they are *hovels*. The only professed openings are a low door and chimney. The joints and cracks that supply the deficiency of plan for ventilation and light, render them incapable of being kept warm or dry. When it rains, they leak ; when it is cold, they are uncomfortable.

The houses of servants may be so built and arranged as not only to avoid the usual appearance of squalidness,

but to be an ornament to the premises. How pleasing the village-like aspect of many plantations—the cabins, or framed or brick cottages of the same size and shape, elevated from the ground, whitewashed and grouped in convenient order ! It is as little trouble when planting a tree to put it in the right as the wrong place ; so in building a house, to place it on a line with others. After all, one thing still is to be looked to : no house, of what dimensions soever, can be comfortable if *crowded*.

The benevolent have conferred no greater blessing on the poor than by providing them a free and full supply of water ; this munificence alone has made more than one name illustrious. Pure water, like the air we breathe, ought to be convenient and abundant. For drinking, cooking, washing and personal cleanliness, nothing can substitute it ; and in every one of these respects servants will suffer if their masters do not arrange for their supply. When water is impure it serves none of these purposes well ; and when it is scarce or must be *toted* a great distance, they will be but scantily realized.

Thus have been enumerated the simplest and primary conditions of servitude, the lowest rewards of labor. In the Scriptures it is written, “Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.”* If God takes care for oxen, how much more for men ? His Christian duties and his worldly interests bind the master to these things. Nothing less can he be expected to do. He who complains at them has no business with servants.

* Deut. xxv : 4. 1 Cor. ix : 9. 1 Tim. v : 18.

If, on account of his management or soil or trade, he cannot perform this much, he cannot do his duty and ought to dissolve the relation out of which it grows. Till these claims are met, the master has no right to count upon any gains from his servant's labor. The original cost must be paid before profits can be declared. And he who, before this be done, enters into luxuries, lives beyond his righteous income and is under condemnation.

It is readily perceived that when all masters learn and discharge these duties, the servants of the South as a *class* will be better off than the free of their own color in the North or elsewhere, and elevated quite above the average of the world's poor. Comparisons may be challenged, and gainsaying silenced. It is by no means sought to avoid such a conclusion. The assertion is made, without hazard, that Southern labor, with its productiveness and singular *concentration*, can accomplish all this.

DUTIES OF CHRISTIAN MASTERS TO SERVANTS AS SOCIAL
BEINGS.

Moral Treatment.:—Servants are capable of this, for they are spirit as well as flesh. Their sympathies and affections, their capacity for the joys and sorrows of the highest mode of existence, must all be taken into account in their government. Authority should be exercised without wantonness or unnecessary harshness. Commands should be issued kindly, "forbearing threat-

ening.”* Reproachful epithets and railing should be avoided. Why should not a servant’s feelings be respected? These cannot be returned or resented, even in their low kind, and are the uncalled for insults of power over weakness.

Punishment :—The magistrate and the parent and the master have a final resort to corporal pains. The rod and the sword they must all bear, and sometimes not in vain. One law in the infliction of punishment should govern them alike—they should be inflicted in the manner and to the extent only necessary for *correction*—and not for the gratification of revenge. Moderation becomes the master; for his servant is in his hands to do with him as he will. His severity is not limited “to forty stripes save one,” nor is his anger cooled by the delays of the law. Are not corporal penalties sometimes administered in a manner, and to an extent, evidently not dictated by any legitimate aims, but urged on by the phrensy of passion?

The master rules to great disadvantage to himself who depends solely or mainly upon the fear of punishment. There is a higher law of control. The influence of society should be brought to bear. The inner man should be addressed. Shame and mortification are heavier lashes than any whip thong. A desire to beget favor and preserve confidence is the highest guarantee for faithfulness. Can human beings who have no restraints but the handcuff and the lock-up, no stimulus but the lash, be

* Eph. vi : 9.

safe, trustworthy or profitable? It is expensive, and, indeed, impossible, to keep them always in awe. This is the *regime* that makes eye-servants, runaways and out-laws. What is the service of man worth, if it be not a *willing* service? It requires many turns and strokes to complete a job that no watching and driving can get out of him. That which is grudgingly done can not be well done. There is this peculiarity in human labor—it can direct itself. Will and intelligence conspire to make the strength put forth, of superior application to that of brutes or machines. But, if this element of its value be destroyed out of it by moral treatment, it becomes comparatively worthless.

Social regulations :—The happiness of men and their chief excellencies depend largely upon the rules which govern their intercourse. Improvement in them is progress indeed. Legislators, in the exercise of their highest wisdom, establish these for their masters; and the masters for their servants. To acquit themselves of this duty, they need judgment, observation and experience, and the gracious guidance of Heaven.

Some masters have a code of laws as well understood as if written. Their household and plantation servants present the appearance of well-governed communities. A tribunal exists where complaints may be referred, grievances redressed and disputes settled. All transactions of a social nature proceed upon settled principles. They do not criminally trifle with their servants in words and promises; but conscientiously keep a good faith towards them, and constrain them to keep it among themselves.

The ear of the highest authority is ever open. It is counted no unworthy condescension to inquire into the disturbances of this subordinate empire, and to set the wrong right. The lowest functions of justice and judgment are not despised. This is worthy of all praise.

But there are masters who seem yet to be ignorant of the social nature of the beings under them; and that to deny them the blessings of well ordered society is to subject them to the most serious of all deprivations. They live together as they list. So the appointed work is done and the tribute money forthcoming, they are allowed to do to one another as it seemeth good in their own eyes. With the exception of this one law *of work* all the evils of anarchy are endured. There is no society; it is mere herding. His sovereign authority is never interposed, so no limbs are broken. There is injustice and oppression among them; they are left to settle their contentions upon the rude principles of might and right. The master will not trouble himself with the details of their questions—like another Gallio, caring for none of these things.

Matrimonial Alliances:—Marriage is honorable in all men. In conferring upon them the inestimable blessings of society, in whatever condition, they must be taught to regard it in its true character and proper obligations. To this the serious attention of masters is invited. Unless something be done here, the foundations and elements of society must be wanting among servants. Bigamy and polygamy, with all their corruptions and evils, will prevail; and the domestic constitu-

tion degenerate into the most limited and loose of all partnerships. When neither law, nor custom, nor the necessity of providing support to their common offspring binds the parties together, the merest caprice will dissolve the compact; nor can the peculiarities of their condition hinder the deplorable results which follow in the natural course. A habit of intercourse and social relations tending to these results, should be arrested by the timely and appropriate rebuke of the master. The Grecians in their semi-barbarous days, were more concerned for the number than the morality of their citizens; and, so a healthy child was born, no questions were asked. But those who have received the seventh commandment cannot wink at such things, and be guiltless before God. Owing so much of their own happiness to this relation, they must not be indifferent to the degree in which the happiness of their servants is liable to be affected by licentiousness rioting among them.

The writer has conversed with clergymen of different denominations who have endeavored to embrace this part of our population in church communion, and it appears that this is the chief stumbling block to their Christianity. At least two-thirds of all the irregularities and scandalous offences calling for the exercise of church discipline originate here, directly or remotely.

They are exposed to these disorders by that predominance of passion always pertaining to inferior culture; also from the intimacy with which they are associated; but more, from the informality of their marriage alliances. When nothing but the private consent of the parties is

requisite for marriage, and the first intimation of it is its fruit, it must follow that all lines soon fade away.

It is the duty of Christian masters to promote virtuous and fixed attachments between the sexes, and while encouraging marriage to guard it with all the forms of consent, postponement, preparation and solemn consummation. A marriage supper is often given. Beforehand the impediments should be looked into, and if any grave ones exist they should work a prohibition. Let the institution be magnified; and when once consummated by the master's permission, all the mutual rights it confers should be protected by his authority.

Here is an instance in point: it occurred several years ago on the plantation of a Christian master. Among his servants was a young and good looking, but not very amiable woman, who had had as many husbands as the Samaritan, and was childless. At the time alluded to she was about to take another, who if taken in the same style, would doubtless soon have gone the way of his predecessors. As was the custom, when a servant not owned on the place wished to take a wife on it, and obtain the liberty of the premises, this last suitor came to the master with the usual form of request—"May I have —— for a wife, please sir." "What," said the master, "I thought she had a husband; have they parted?" "O yes sir, and now she says she'll have me." The master bethought him that a little ceremony might help the matter, and as this was a hard case, resolved to try it. So, he picked up a book and went down to the

“quarter.” The pair were formally drawn out before him, and opening his book he pronounced a ceremony. The writer, though he heard them, would not vouch that the words used were in any book, but believes the one used was an old copy of the English Reader. The effect was magical. The matter for the first time took a serious turn. They twain became one flesh. Children were born to them; and, at last information, they bade fair to live together in love and peace to their lives’ end.

Family ties and Connections:—To be “without natural affection” is, according to St. Paul, descriptive of the worst state of being. Kindred relations should be fostered, for they give to society its strongest bonds. Without them it lacks cohesiveness and can only be maintained by factitious means. This is the order of nature, and if it be set aside, the master’s influence cannot be so applied as to counteract the disorder. The ties of brother and sister, and even of more distant connections, should be felt. Parents must not be cut off from children and children must be taught respect and reverence for their parents.

Servants ought, as far as possible, to be divided into families, and thus there is an opportunity for family government. What has been said already upon their houses might be enlarged upon here. In the country, where ground is no object, a considerable space may be allotted to each dwelling. Poultry may be raised or vegetables, or the market may be furnished with more substantial staples. Why not gratify the *home feeling*

of the servant? Local as well as family associations may thus easily be cast about him, as strong yet pleasing cords binding him to his master. He may be so involved in the order of things that he would not, for any consideration, have it disturbed. He is made happier and safer; put beyond discontent or the temptations to rebellion and abduction; for he gains nothing in comparison to what he loses. His comforts cannot be removed with him and he will stay with them. But break him loose and keep him isolated from such attachments, and what is there to detain him in service! He is as insecure as any other restless roaming creature when an opportunity offers of escaping restraint.

The strength of these attachments is being constantly tested in those servants who, even when beyond the line, voluntarily return *home*, notwithstanding all the persuasions with which they are plied. In the Old Testament such a case is anticipated and provided for. The servant is bound to a master for only a term of years, at the expiration of which he is to go out free, as he came in, and for nothing. In the meantime he conceives that affection for his master, and his master's house, which grows up naturally under kind treatment. A wife, of the servants, is given to him, who bears him sons and daughters. Now the year of his release has rolled round and he plainly says, "I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out free." Then, instead of emancipation, a law is made and provided for his entering into perpetual servitude.*

*Exodus, xxi : 5. Deut., xv : 16.

A gratifying change has been, of late years, wrought in the public mind as to buying and selling servants, and otherwise breaking up their family ties by emigration, the partition of estates, &c. A few masters, and for the honor of humanity be it said *they are few*, will sell to the highest bidder. Heart-strings and tears stand not, with them, in the way of dollars and cents. A tender Joseph is torn away from a disconsolate sire and sold to Ishmaelitish merchants for so many pieces of silver. The price only is considered, not the new master, or place, or distance.

Now this may be a proper punishment for great and incorrigible offenders. But unless it be done for such a reason, or unless it be the result of a necessity absolutely uncontrollable by the master, it is *incexcusable*. Christian masters generally know their duty in this thing, and are doing it. They sacrifice other property to save their servants; and if finally compelled to part with them, willingly sacrifice upon their market-value to secure for them good homes and keep them in families. If under other circumstances a servant is disposed of, it is generally with his consent and solicitation. It is surely an awful thing to put asunder those whom God has joined together. Wherever these endearing connections are held liable to being rent, at the caprices of trade, servants are often led, in self-defence, to stand aloof from them, and thus abandon themselves to those promiscuous habits, at once demoralizing and destructive.

Sick servants.:—The centurion commends himself to every generous heart who is represented in the gospel as

addressing Christ in behalf of his sick servant.* What affectionate solicitude he displays! It leads him to secure the *best* remedial aid, and call in one he judged himself unworthy to approach and of whom his house was unworthy. That servant was "dear unto him." None of his fellow-servants cared for him as his master did, and none could do as much. Noble master! One hardly knows which to admire most, his humble views of himself, his reverence for the physician, or his tenderness for the patient. Saving faith could hardly be wanting in the presence of such qualities. The servant was not his companion—yet it was not incompatible with their relations that he should be *dear* to him. It was not his *value* that moved in his master this fine exhibition of character. He abandoned him not to pine in neglect; but doubtless his daily visits cheered him and his own hand alleviated his miseries.

Old servants:—These are the heir-looms of the house. It is a pleasing thing to see an old family servant cherished. Perhaps he laid the foundations of the family's wealth, and is now listened to as the chronicler of its legends. Let him enjoy the evening of life and repose upon the fruits of labor past. Cast him not off, now he is old and grey-headed, nor forsake him when his strength fails. The kind master will for no consideration part with such an one. He will feel his support no burden, but a pleasure rather. He will indulge him; feed him from his own table; treat him with mingled

*Luke vii: 1, 10.

tenderness and respect, and see to it that others treat him likewise. For such a green and cheerful old age should every faithful servant be permitted to hope.

DUTIES OF CHRISTIAN MASTERS TO SERVANTS AS RELIGIOUS BEINGS.

The redemption that is in Jesus Christ compasses the "bond and free." From its earliest preaching, both were addressed and both made up the first Christian churches. In reference to religion, to God, to eternity, and the great paternity of the human race, servants stand upon a common platform with their masters. Whatever cavils a false philosophy may start, they cannot be denied their full *ethical* character. Experiments have, for generations past, been carried on, and they are abundantly satisfactory on this point. The most unexceptionable specimens of Christianity are to be found among them. It would be a thrilling page that should give their history. The highest style of regenerated man and the fitness of the gospel for all classes would be at once and admirably shown. Not only has the inward experience answered to every Scripture standard, but the life has been exemplary, the death happy. Facts are the confutation of infidel theories upon this subject. Many a master is ready to grant, that among his servants are better Christians than himself.

It would be madness in us to question the propriety of it, but certainly such is the arrangement of Providence—that several human beings may be so related to

another, that their spiritual as well as physical and social welfare may be materially affected for good or evil by him—yea almost controlled. The abuse of this relation, or its liability to abuse, is not, as some have argued in the matter of slavery, to be considered as an argument *a priori* against the lawfulness of the relation itself. For those authorized by God, His word gives directions how they shall be maintained. The abuse results from neglecting duty:—for this, an account must be rendered to God, and sometimes indeed the account must be awful.

The relation of parent and child, not to mention others, is a lawful one. Yet the parent may so abuse the power it confers, as to ruin his child bodily, mentally and spiritually. Or he may cultivate his body and mind and social qualities, and totally neglect his spiritual culture. He may so surround him by influences and shut him in by prohibitions as to deprave and keep him depraved; and while all the consequences of impiety shall fall heavily upon the child, the parent is to blame as the cause. Saith the wise man, "There is a generation that curseth their father and doth not bless their mother."* Notwithstanding, though father and mother may have so performed their parts as to leave no grateful remembrances of themselves to those who were dependent upon them, this dependence was of God.

The master has souls as well as bodies under his care. The responsibility of eternal as well as temporal interests

*Proverbs, xxx: 11.

rests upon his shoulders. The teacher of religion can be forbid his premises, and his servants can be hindered from going to him wherever he erects his stand for instruction. Thus, in the heart of Christendom, a servants' quarter may be kept as dark as Paganism. Or otherwise—and the Christian master will do otherwise—free access may be allowed them to the Word of life. The Evangelist may be invited to come and teach, and his way be prepared before him. How profoundly do servants respect that messenger who is introduced by the master! How weighty with them the tidings *he* listens to with reverence! If he possess that moral influence with them he ought to have, a word or deed of his can magnify the cause in their eyes, or put contempt upon it. Such responsibility should make him *tremble*: such unparalleled opportunity for doing good should make him *rejoice*.

There is need of discretion. On the one hand, the master may be wanting in a show of becoming interest: he may fail culpably in pressing his servants to the improvement of their religious privileges. For, what he esteems lightly, will be lightly esteemed by them. He is chargeable with a measure of influence, such as no one else possesses, that may be brought savingly to bear upon them. On the other hand, he may extend to religion such injudicious patronage as will interfere with a wholesome religious liberty. His servants may not remain unbelievers, but may become hypocrites. Now, all that is asked for Christianity is a fair operation. Let no extra inducements be held out for its profession; no disa-

bilities be incurred by its non-profession. Let religion be offered to the servant, as it is to the master, with friendly, affectionate commendations, but no other rewards than its own blessings.

Provisions for religious instruction:—In cities and villages, where churches are numerous and convenient, permission for attendance may discharge the master, as far as public ministrations to his servants are concerned. But in rural districts, where they are scarce and distant, permission to go, in many instances, amounts to no gospel privilege at all. To the strong and healthy the walk may be trifling; but the aged and infirm, who need heavenly consolations as much as any, are entirely deprived unless the means of going be furnished. Arrived at the place of worship, where are the accommodations? Sometimes a portion of the church has been assigned them, roomy and comfortably seated:—sometimes this has been overlooked, and they are left to stroll around, or listen to the sermon at the window, or under the poor shelter of an arbor. They have been invited to the gospel feast, but no places have been provided for them. With hungering, unfed souls they look on—the spectators of others' piety and not partakers of the common grace.

It is desirable that white and colored worship together: one reason among many is, that no distinctions of religion arise between them. Religion appears in its loveliest form where rich and poor, bond and free, meet together, and to a common Father, through a common Saviour, drinking into one Spirit, offer up songs and

prayers, and hear what all have an equal interest in. The attempt to make the services intelligible and interesting to an audience thus composed, must ever impart to them the excellent qualities of strength and perspicuity, simplicity and earnestness. But whenever this is impracticable, the master, either alone or jointly with his nearest neighbors, ought to make *special* provisions for his servants. A chapel should be built for them, in which he and his own family may be occasionally seen, and a stated supply of religious instruction engaged for. In this thing numerous and noble examples have already been set.

The gospel is free in what it offers ; but it cannot be sent free. The subject-matter of infinite worth, is without money and without price ; but more or less expense is incurred in its promulgation. Some body must pay for preaching to servants. A plain question of justice is, who ought to pay for it ? Who, but the master ? He is directly concerned in their improvement ; no one is so responsible to God for their salvation ; he gets and enjoys the benefit of their toil, and can he consent that they should receive the bread of life as a gratuity from others ! Will he cast them as spiritual beneficiaries upon the charity of some benevolent man or association of men ! He is bound in honesty and honor, and ought to claim it as a privilege, to step forward and meet all these charges cheerfully. It is as much a debt he owes as that incurred for their food and raiment : a debt, of which none has precedence, for no wants are greater and more pressing than those it was incurred to meet ;—and if the master

do not meet it, then it is *others* who provide his servants with the gospel *and not he*. And in this connection may be quoted a text with better application than is usually given it: "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel."* The so-called Christian master conceding to his colored dependents the possession of souls—souls to be saved or lost, and the necessity of embracing the gospel in order to salvation, with all their means in his hands, leaves them to perish. How cruel, how worse than infidel! For the infidel, discarding the whole matter of soul and salvation, is consistent.

It takes from the moral beauty and effectiveness of family worship, if the domestics are not joined in it. They, with the master, and mistress, and children, are partakers of the grace of God, and should have their share in the Home-Altar. Of family prayer, it has been said, "It is the oil which removes friction, and causes all the complicated wheels of the family to move smoothly and noiselessly." The servants of the household should be in their places there; not by invitation only, but as a fixed rule, a duty. A master may no more neglect their spiritual instruction, than a parent the spiritual instruction of his children. The Lord gave this high praise to Abraham—"For I know him that he will *command* his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and

* 1 Timothy v. 8.

judgment.”* He exerted his magisterial authority as well as parental, to constrain servants and children in the ways of religion. He entered not into the covenant alone ; but on the self same day, he and his son received the seal of it, and all his servants, born in his house, or bought with money of the stranger.†

In the temple service, things brought as offerings were peculiarly holy. The priests and their immediate families only were permitted to eat of them. Even a daughter of a priest, married to one out of the priesthood, was by that act placed beyond the liberty of the family. Not so with the bond-servant ; his position and rights are distinctly recognized :—“ There shall no stranger eat of the holy thing ; a sojourner of the priest, or an hired servant, shall not eat of the holy thing. But if the priest buy any soul with his money he shall eat of it, and he that is born in his house, they shall eat of his meat. If the priest’s daughter also be married unto a stranger, she may not eat of an offering of the holy things.”‡

Does not this relation of a master to his servants impose upon him the same attention to his spiritual wants as other members of his family ? His contributions to the support of the gospel, therefore, ought to bear a righteous proportion to the souls dependent on him for its instructions ; and what he expends in this way exclusively for his servant’s benefit cannot be called cha-

* Genesis, xviii. 19.

† Genesis, xvii. 26, 27.

‡ Leviticus, xxii. 10, 11, 12.

riches—it cannot be put to the account of strictly benevolent or missionary contributions. As justly might his taxes be regarded a donation to the government, or the provision-stores he orders for his house and plantation be set down to the score of almsgiving. *After* these home-obligations to the gospel have been met, *then* it has claims upon him with all others enjoying its benefits. It must not only be supported, but sent abroad. There are those who have never heard its sound, and they must hear and receive it before they can so prize it, as, in their turn, to support and send it out. There are servants, who are not so fortunate as to have masters with a Christian concern for their souls. In caring for *these*, charity begins. Here is missionary work proper. The aid given in such a cause only is a contribution to Christian benevolence.

Servants, if not furnished with enlightened devotion, fall into superstition. It is, therefore, expedient, as it is kind, to meet the wants of their religious nature with sound doctrine. Superstition is always hurtful, and to the whole man. Its imaginings are dark and gloomy, its rites cruel, its yoke debasing, and all its tendencies wasting and corrupting. Who has not remarked these effects among foreign heathens; and, to more or less extent, they must prevail among domestic heathens. Devil-worship, conjuration and witchcraft, are the malign forms of it among the servants of the South, to whom “the way, the truth and the life,” has not been made known.

There is nothing in the Bible which a master might

fear for his servant to know ; not even a bad master. There is nothing in the simple text, or its correct enlargement, that impairs his authority. On the contrary, that authority is guarded by sanctions stronger than any within his reach. As a neighbor is a better neighbor, and a child a better child, for being a consistent, well-informed Christian, so it is with a servant. To the fear of corporeal punishment, or the love of reward, there is superadded a conscience of duty. He is rendered contented with his lot, because it is the will of God. His temper and conduct will be improved. Docility, honesty, fidelity, will be promoted. Submission is taught on the ground of principle, not necessity. There is not a precept to start the thought of servile insurrection. No reasonable master could draw out a code of laws for the government of his servants that will meet his own welfare at so many points, as those to be found in the Word of God.

When Sarai, Abraham's wife, dealt hardly with her maid-servant Hagar, she fled from her. In running away Hagar was met by an angel, who thus instructed her—"Return to thy mistress and submit thyself under her hands."* One of the letters of St. Paul was borne by a converted servant back to his master, who, but for his conversion and apostolic instructions, would, doubtless, never have laid eyes on the fugitive again.†

Lest servants should suppose that upon their embracing Christianity, on equal terms with their Christian

* Genesis, xvi. 6-7.

† Epistle to Philemon by Onesimus.

masters, and thereby becoming *brethren*, the relation of master and servant was disturbed and its authority lost, they are thus admonished:—"Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? Care not for it."* "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them (or take license to disregard them as such) because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved partakers of the benefit."†

How secure and comfortable must that master's position be whose servants have learned such rules as these: "Servants obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God; and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men.‡" "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things, not answering again; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity."|| "Servants be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward."§ The legitimate effect of conversion upon a servant in the promotion of every estimable quality is impressively alluded to by St. Paul, in returning the converted Onesimus to his Christian master:—"Which in time past

* 1 Cor., vii. 20, 21.

† 1 Timothy, vi. 1, 2.

‡ Colossians, iii. 22, 23.

|| Titus, ii. 9, 10. § 1 Peter, 11, 18.

was to thee *unprofitable*, but now profitable to thee and me."* The change for the better in Onesimus was worth this journey to Rome. The Apostle, doubtless, from his acquaintance with the master, was not ignorant of the worthless character of the servant previously; nor was he ignorant of what his gospel could do in such a case. Now, the fugitive and thief is restored to his master by conscientious promptings, no more to run away or steal. But the joy of the master must have fallen far below that of the Christian, for a soul was saved from death.

All considerations, then, unite in engaging the Christian master to do his duty towards his servants as religious beings; his interests, their happiness, and the account that must be rendered by him to his Master in heaven. Thousands of souls for whom Christ died, would have cause to rejoice were Christian masters awakened to their responsibilities on this subject. The Church which labors under so many embarrassments and hindrances for their salvation, would, with a co-operation coming from the right quarter, soon do its work in this interesting field lying around our doors, and concentrate its strength in the regions beyond.

There comes a period in every servant's history whom his master survives, that must press home to the master's heart weighty reflections. It is when the toil of this life ends in death, and that death is accomplished without any cheering prospect of the life to come; and

* Philemon, 11.

the servant finds his humble grave. "He dwelt long with me and received laws from me. He served me well, and when the day was done demanded no hire. What have I done for him? Bears he no charge against me to my Master in heaven? Did I treat him as having a soul to save, and what have I done for his salvation? Am I clear of his blood?" Depend upon it, O Christian master, your servants will confront you before His bar with whom is no respect of persons, and how can you be approved when they complain—"No man cared for our souls?"

CRESCENT.

MELVILLE LETTERS ;
OR,
THE DUTIES OF MASTERS
TO THEIR SERVANTS.

BY
REV. C. F. STURGIS,
Of Greensboro', Alabama.

“The first great duty of masters is to study the duties of masters.”

CHARLESTON, S. C. :
SOUTHERN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY.
1851.



TO REV. SAMUEL K. TALMAGE, D. D.,

President of Oglethorpe University.

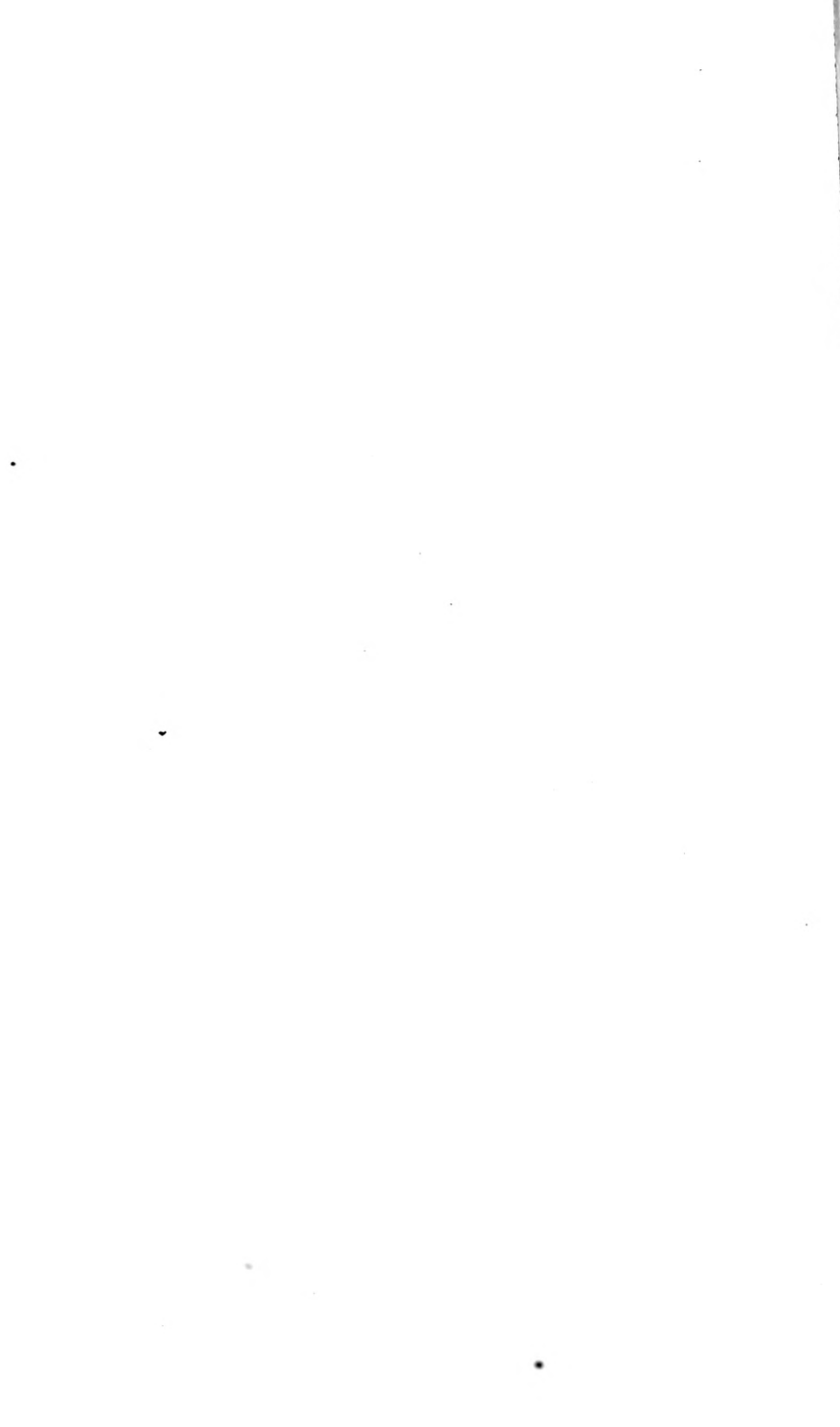
Honored and beloved brother in Christ Jesus,—When Moses, the man of God, prayed that remarkable prayer, (Ex. 33 : 18,) “*I beseech thee, show me thy glory*,” the answer of the Almighty was, “I will make all my *goodness* to pass before thee.” Although the world, and, alas ! the Church itself, is too far from valuing unobtrusive goodness, as superior to all other glory, yet we look to a brighter age, when both the Church and the world will see correctly on this subject.

In the spirit of this hope, allow me to offer these humble “LETTERS” as a tribute to “Mr. TALMAGE,” the kind, sympathizing and faithful Pastor, whose highest pleasure it seemed to guide his flock in paths of righteousness; and who, years ago, sought to lead, in ways of piety, the inexperienced feet of her who is now my beloved wife, the mother of my little ones.

Yours, affectionately,

C. F. STURGIS.

Greensboro', Ala., Feb. 10th, 1851.



P R E F A C E .

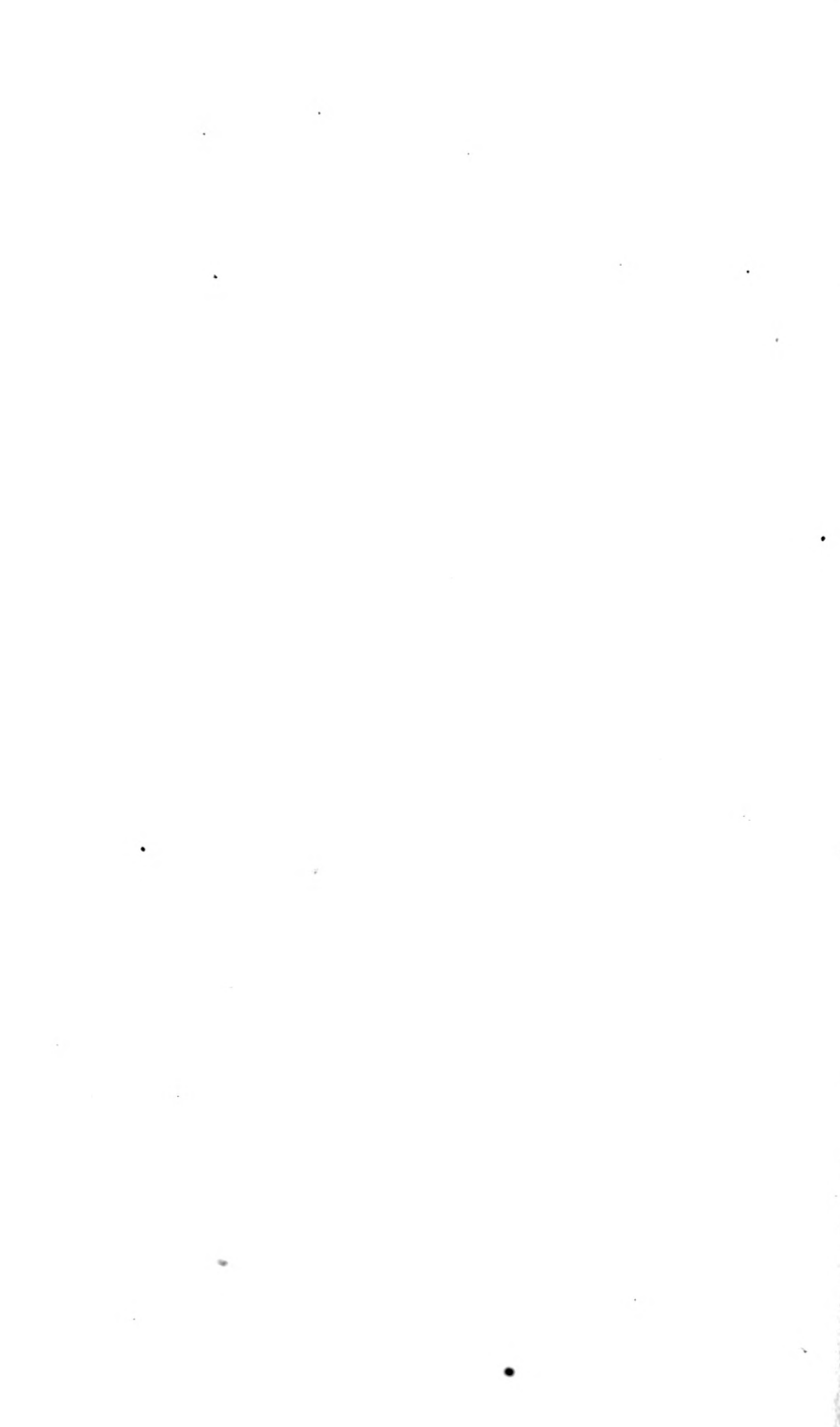
THESE letters purport to be a correspondence between two brothers, who here appear under the fictitious names of Joseph and William Melville.

The elder of the brothers (Joseph) is, by supposition, not a professor of religion, but a man religiously educated—a politician and a member of the legal profession. The younger is supposed to be a professed Christian, a conscientious and religious man.

How far the things contained in these letters have had a real existence, it is, perhaps, not necessary to say. No sensible man would think of objecting to "*Æsop's Fables*," or the "*Pilgrim's Progress*," because the one makes beasts, and birds, and fishes, talk, or because the other describes characters which, perhaps, never had an existence, but in the beautiful conceptions of the author.

We all feel that the moral remains the same, whether the beasts and birds talked or not, and whether there ever was precisely such a personage as "Giant Despair," or "the Interpreter."

All that the author asks is, that the same indulgence be extended to his humble letters.



MELVILLE LETTERS;

OR, THE

DUTIES OF MASTERS TO THEIR SERVANTS.

G———, *October 27th, 18—.*

MY DEAR BROTHER JOSEPH,—

I HAVE for some time been impressed with a duty to you, from which I have shrunk, until I can resist my convictions no longer. The esteem in which I have ever held you, both as a man and as my own beloved brother, would constrain me to bear any thing that did not involve a conscientious conviction of duty, rather than inflict any, even the slightest pain, upon your feelings; and with this declaration, which I beg you to receive in its fullest meaning, I proceed to state what I have no doubt will surprise you; that the subject upon which I have felt these conscientious convictions, and concerning which I conceive that I owe you a duty, is to address you seriously upon the question, "*whether you are doing your whole duty to your servants or not?*" I am aware that this communication will create the more surprise, when you remember my frequent expressions of admiration of

your well conducted farm, and the comfort and apparent happiness of your people. I know that you believe me incapable of duplicity, and yet there is, I admit, an apparent discrepancy between these expressions of admiration and the topic introduced, which, I confess, needs, and which, I promise, shall receive in its proper place a due explanation. Not to trespass upon you, however, one moment, without your permission, and, indeed, approbation, I shall close this, by remarking, that if you are not disinclined, I would like to engage in a correspondence with you upon this subject ; and that you may have distinctly before you my object, in thus seeming to obtrude this question, I will state it briefly as follows :

1st. For the benefit of the servant.

2d. For the benefit and increased happiness of the master.

3d. For the sake of our beloved country, which is so frequently and so severely agitated, almost to dismemberment, by the question of the moral rectitude of domestic servitude. In reference to this last topic, I may be allowed to remark, that I regard it as of incalculable importance, even more than I can express ; I sincerely believe, and sensibly feel, that if masters could be prevailed upon to study, and would perform their whole duty to their servants, nine-tenths, if not all the objections to slavery, especially in reasonable minds, would be silenced thereby.

Hoping to hear from you soon,

I am, your affectionate brother,

WILLIAM R. MELVILLE.

Melville Cottage, November 7th, 18—.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—

YOURS of the 27th October was received, and, I must admit, as you anticipated, *I was surprised not a little*. I cannot imagine the many expressions of commendation that you have bestowed upon me as a master, to have been in the slightest degree insincere ; and yet, what shall I say ? I can but use your own words, “*they require explanation.*”

I shall assent to your request to correspond upon this subject ; if for no other reason, from a desire to know what fault you find in my manner of discharging my duties in this matter, but I beg leave to remind you of the admonition of Solomon, concerning being “*righteous over-much,*” which admonition you will easily remember. I would not for a moment compare, my dear *good* brother, to those politico-religionists who are continually disturbing the nation upon this subject ; yet I do think that I see, in the disposition to agitate this question, that which makes me uneasy ; and I fear that the effort will fail of any of these beneficial results you seem to anticipate, either to the servant, the master, or to the country. Indeed, it is my honest conviction, that the agitation of this question has resulted already in laying both masters and legislators under a kind of necessity to be more stringent in reference to the blacks ; and the consequences have been, that the condition of the slave population at the South has been injured, rather than

benefited by such officious interference ; and, rest assured, what has been, will be again and always.

In regard to the correspondence, I heartily accord the privilege of expressing to me your views upon that subject ; and, indeed, as already intimated, my curiosity is a little excited to know upon what points you consider me remiss ; indeed, there is scarcely one of them who does not laugh more and sigh less than I do.

However, not to protract this, I close by hoping that I shall hear from you soon ; and, I'll warrant one thing, where you find one master, religious or irreligious, whose servants fare better, I will find ten whose servants fare worse than mine. But, at the same time, if you can show me what duty I neglect, I hold myself pledged, as a candid man, to listen, and lay myself open to conviction.

I am, your affectionate brother,

JOSEPH L. MELVILLE.

G———, *November 20th, 18—.*

MY DEAR BROTHER JOSEPH,—

IN the first place, I thank you for the privilege to write you my views of the duties of masters. But, at the same time, I must say, with all deference to your general good judgment, that I conclude you to have misunderstood both Solomon and myself, in applying his injunction not to be "*righteous over-much*" to me ;

but, as neither he (Solomon) nor I am at all likely to demand an apology, you can be let down gently for this fault; I will only say, that however expert my brother may be at a point of law, or a question of political economy, I have, in my day, known more competent expositors of Scripture.

I shall seize the earliest opportunity to enter upon the proposed discussion, and hope (your ordinarily excellent opinion to the contrary notwithstanding) that it will be in my power, (even mine) to make good my proposed work, viz:—To show, as suggested, that all parties, the servant, the master and the country, must be benefited by a proper and temperate discussion of this subject.

With regard to the difficulties with which this discussion is invested, my views are precisely as your own; and I agree with you perfectly in your opinion, respecting the effects of Northern interference in this matter; I sincerely believe that it has thrown the prospects of the black man, like the shadow on the dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. I shall enter upon this discussion as early as possible.

In the meantime,

I remain, your affectionate brother,

WILLIAM R. MELVILLE.

G————, *November 30th, 18—.*

DEAR JOSEPH,—

ACCORDING to promise and our agreement, I now enter upon the expression of my views concerning the great question before us. But I shall more particularly, at this time, attempt to clear the way for the discussion, by showing that there is a necessity that the duties of masters be discussed ; and that there is such a thing as discussing these duties in a manner that is perfectly safe.

In undertaking the first of these propositions, I beg leave to remark, that unless masters take the absurd position, that in the very act of becoming masters, they, by some wonderful intuition or instinctive process, unanalogous to any thing else in nature, even all masters, without exception, become possessed of all the knowledge and experience necessary to a master ; unless, I say, masters believe, and can successfully show to mankind all this to be true, then we claim that to some masters, at least, this discussion is necessary. But, as I confidently presume that none will attempt to defend a position like this, then, it must be admitted, that the discussion is necessary to some masters.

If, then, it be admitted that to some masters the discussion is needful, the following points are established :

First. The servants of such masters may be improved in their conditions, either morally or physically, or both.

Secondly. The masters themselves may be made happier, in witnessing the improved condition of their people ;

and not only happier, but more prosperous; for it will be shown throughout this discussion, that *the interest of the servant, and the real interests of the master, are one and inseparable.*

If these things are proved, then it will follow, by an obvious consequence, that the country must be benefited, in the silencing of the clamor that has for years disturbed our peace, and which, ever and anon, threatens our overthrow.

I have attentively weighed the best arguments that have been produced against slavery, and am convinced that the question of slavery, as an evil in itself, must always go against the abolitionist, as long as the Bible is taken as authority, and is interpreted according to the established laws of interpretation; and that it is only when the abuses growing out of slavery are drawn into the discussion, that any thing like a tolerable case can be made out by them. Such, I honestly believe, will be the result of a proper discussion of this subject; but let masters pertinaciously refuse to consider their duties, and they at once confirm the impression already on many minds, that they are resolved to stand by their institution right or wrong; and they thus open the way for all the absurd statements of our enemies to be believed.

I know that such considerations as these must and will impress you, for they impress every high-minded man; but I am aware, too, of what your feelings are upon this subject, and they are the feelings of thousands, viz:—That it will never do to begin such a discussion. I am, however, of a different opinion. If, as I flatter

myself, I have shown the condition of servants, morally and physically, can be benefited—if masters can be made happier in witnessing this improvement in the condition of their people—and last, but not least, if the condition of our beloved country can be benefited by the allaying of the spirit of discord that is rife upon this subject, then I hold that it requires weighty considerations indeed to justify us in refusing to discuss it. For my own part, I am accustomed to believe that duty is always safe. And, moreover, although *we* may shrink from the responsibility of establishing a healthful public opinion concerning this thing, still it must be done by those who come after us ; and our posterity may have this task to perform under circumstances far less favorable than even those by which we are surrounded.

You urge, as a main ground of your objection, "*past experience*," and I fully accord with you, that the agitation of these matters by the abolitionists, has thrown the whole affair backward, rather than forward. But I conceive the proposed discussion to be a very different thing. They (the abolitionists) send emissaries to tamper with the blacks, and awaken in their minds dissatisfaction and jealousies. I propose a free interchange of opinion among Southern men, as regards the best means of rendering them comfortable and happy—a difference, you perceive, as wide as the poles. They publish fancy descriptions of cruelties and barbarities, the most enormous and revolting. I propose descriptions of model farms, and mills, and manufactories, conducted by slave labor.

They get up mixed assemblies to harangue about sending missionaries to evangelize Southern slaveholders. I propose the discussion of the best means by which the great mass of the slave population may be brought under the healthful influences of religion, and supplied regularly with the means of religious instruction and religious enjoyment.

How such discussions as these are calculated to awaken prejudices or uneasiness, in any well organized and intelligent mind, I am at a loss to determine.

Lest, however, I weary you, I bring this letter to a close, by earnestly desiring that you give me your views in the most candid manner, concerning what I have now said. Have I convinced you that "THE FIRST GREAT DUTY OF MASTERS IS TO DISCUSS THE DUTIES OF MASTERS, WITH A VIEW TO THEIR PERFORMANCE?" And have I succeeded, in any degree, in convincing you that there is a possibility of discussing these duties in a manner that is safe to all parties?

I cannot say that my mind is fully made up, as to the particular modes and vehicles by which this discussion should be carried on. I am satisfied that any thing like parade, or public demonstration of any kind, would be decidedly unadvisable. So far as my mind is made up, I am of the opinion that communications to agricultural, religious, or other papers, would be productive of good. The results of experiments in farming or manufacturing, are among the things we want; and the best modes of doing every thing, the great result to be aimed at. As

to the details, I am free to confess the superiority of your judgment.

Hoping to hear from you soon, and in full,

I remain yours fraternally,

WILLIAM R. MELVILLE.

Here a letter omitted, but the character of it may be inferred from the next, which is in part an answer.

—————, *December 9th*, 18—.

MY DEAR JOSEPH,—

YOURS of the 5th inst., in answer to my last, was duly received, and it gratifies me to know that my views so nearly accord with your own. As to the few minor points upon which we differ, I repeat what I said, that results are what I seek ; if I can convince slaveholders that their first and great duty is to discuss these duties, and that it can be done with safety, I am entirely indifferent as regards the means, provided they be honorable. And now this branch of the subject being disposed of, I have a proposition to submit, which, I hope, will meet your views. I forewarn you, however, that I am about to surprise you as much as when I first sprung this discussion upon you. But if I can show sufficient reasons why you should accede to my suggestions, I hope and believe that you *will* accede to them ;

and if I do not show sufficient reasons, you will, indeed you ought, to decline.

Not to keep you longer in suspense, I will announce my suggestion. It is, that you commence, at your earliest convenience, and write me *your* views of the duties of masters, in one letter, or a series of letters, as may best suit yourself; and if you have no objection, I will restrict the discussion to this, viz:—" *The duties of such masters as feel responsible to God for the discharge of the duties they owe their slaves.*"

The considerations I offer why you should consent to this are various, as follows:

First. It will give an agreeable variety to the discussion, and thereby relieve the tediousness of one writing, and the other reading, all that is to be said upon the subject.

Secondly. I may become, in turn, a learner from you, as well as appear as your instructor.

Thirdly and chiefly. I am strongly inclined to the opinion that there are very many who, if they could be induced to express their thoughts upon this subject, could give far more intelligent and consistent views than myself.

In addition, I will say, that as I invited this discussion originally, and with the avowed purpose of pointing out to you wherein I considered your system of duties defective, I can more clearly know wherein I conceive it to be so, when I come to understand your opinions more fully.

Should these considerations weigh with you, so as to

induce your assent, I will suggest that you embody, as far as may be convenient, an outline of your own plans; and, as far as you may be acquainted therewith, an outline also of the plans of your neighbor, Mr. M——.

Hoping that this strange proposal will be agreeable to you, and that I shall hear from you soon, I remain yours, affectionately,

WILLIAM R. MELVILLE.

Melville Cottage, December 12th, 18—.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—

YOURS of the 9th is before me, and I remark that you may take the credit of some adroitness, at least; in that you originally drew me into this singular correspondence, and now, in a more singular proposal, design to throw the task of writing upon myself. I have it in mind to rally you a little upon this when we meet, but shall yield to the force of the considerations presented, and at an early day will enter upon the writing of a few letters, upon the following, or some such topics, viz :

First.—Habitations.

Second.—Clothing.

Thirdly.—Food, including arrangements for preparing it, etc.

Fourthly.—Arrangements for sickness, including proper care of the aged, of women, and of children.

Fifthly.—Their own time.

Sixthly.—Pastimes, holidays, etc.

Seventhly.—Overseers, overworking, etc.

Eighthly.—Punishments. By which ominous word I mean, more properly, measures by which to avoid punishment.

Yours, very affectionately,

JOSEPH L. MELVILLE.

Melville Cottage, December 17th, 18—.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—

ACCORDING to promise, I now enter upon a series of letters, in which I propose to set forth my views of the duties of masters—Christian masters, or any other, who wish to have a quiet conscience, and a prosperous business. I shall keep in my mind's eye a farm, large or small; a manufactory, or indeed any establishment conducted by slave labor, or where slaves are assembled in considerable numbers. It occurs to me, that it is chiefly in reference to such cases that light is particularly needed, since servants employed about our houses, in ordinary domestic business, have generally the same fare as their masters, and live nearly as they do. I may further remark, that the principles laid down for such cases as I have mentioned, will be applicable to all others.

At the outset, I would assert what I regard as a fundamental principle,—that a man's servants will not, gene-

rally, long continue to be his, unless he is willing, in some sense, to belong also to them. In other words, the man who expects every thing about him to prosper and flourish, with but little or no personal attention of his own, will, in the end, sooner or later, find that he has been building upon a very uncertain basis.

I think my proposition was to speak first of habitations. I need not say that there is room for some improvement in this particular. I am reminded of your remark, that "*masters do not come instinctively to a knowledge of their duties,*" for I am of the opinion that the instinct of some masters is not far above that of the beaver, in the matter of building a comfortable cabin. Really, if I were actuated by no other feeling than personal pride, I would scorn to see such wretched, filthy cabins, as I have seen on the plantations of wealthy farmers. Farmers? No! A man is not a farmer who is a sloven in his arrangements. When I pass by such settlements, and see miserable smoky hovels, in low, damp situations, black and disagreeable to the sight, I set that man down as a bad economist, and as wanting in all the higher qualities, which make the intelligent and public spirited farmer; and if his negroes are not thievish and degraded, they deserve almost to be canonized as saints, for it seems nearly enough to make any man thievish and mean, to live in the midst of such filth and squalor. On the other hand, when I see a handsome row, or group of houses, on a gentle slope of a hill, all neatly whitewashed, with little garden spots attached to each, and nice rows of trees, and neat grass

plats, upon which the children can sport, and where the men and women can sit and enjoy the evening when their work is done,—when I see such a spectacle as this, I feel that, contrasting the condition of that people with the condition of their ancestors in Africa, or with that of the laboring classes in most of the nations of Europe, we may safely challenge the criticism of the most violent of abolitionists.

I am happy, too, to say, that such spectacles are not only common throughout this country, but are becoming increasingly so; and, I flatter myself, that the time is rapidly approaching, when the great body of slaveholders will know enough of true economy, to understand that it consists mainly in having every thing around arranged in the best and most comfortable style.

That any man should neglect such improvements as these, is the more surprising, when we consider—first, that they can be made with so little trouble, or outlay of actual cash; secondly, the interest the people themselves would take in them, and how much it would add to their comfort, and consequently to their contentment; and, thirdly, the very great advantage to health, as well as to a neat and cheerful appearance. But, as I before remarked, since it is my intention to present the mere seeds of thoughts, I will let this much suffice, as a short chapter concerning habitations. I will take up the subject of clothing in my next, which you may expect ere long.

Your affectionate brother,

JOSEPH L. MELVILLE.

The letter of William, in answer of the preceding, is omitted for the sake of condensation. Its nature may be gathered from the following :

Melville Cottage, December 22d, 18—.

MY DEAR BROTHER WILLIAM,—

As you express yourself pleased with my short letter concerning the *habitations* of servants, I am the more encouraged to proceed to the consideration of the next topic. To say that servants cannot perform their work properly, unless they are properly clad, is to assert a mere truism, that none would think of doubting; and yet how many act as though it were not so. What I said of the feeling of degradation, as created by living in a squalid and filthy habitation, is still more emphatically true, of being clothed in filthy and ragged garments. Furthermore, badly clad servants are so very liable to diseases of various kinds, especially those connected with cold, inclement and rainy weather. A warm climate is the natural home of the black man, and in our latitude he suffers more than ourselves, if unprotected from the severity of the weather. Even when they are not carried off by acute diseases, they sooner show the effects of age; and many of them, late in life, suffer from rheumatic and other affections, in consequence of exposure during youth or manhood. It was an amusing prescription, but certainly a very judicious one, of a facetious physician of my acquaintance, who recommended to a negro man some simple preparation, and told him to say

to his master that it must be "*worked off with a new warm jacket and trowsers.*" Such prescriptions would cure many of the diseases "*which their flesh is heir to,*" and certainly "*would not be bad to take.*"

This is, perhaps, the most appropriate place, in which to suggest a matter of the very first consequence to them, viz: the providing of suitable beds and bedding. We have all the materials on a farm wherewith to make an abundant supply of good comfortable mattresses, and with (we may say) literally no expense worthy a moments consideration, when brought into contrast with the health and comfort of the people. Shucks and cotton, which make, when properly prepared, an admirable mattress, are abundant on any farm; and the preparation could be taken, among other things, as rainy day's work; and thus, at an expense that would never be felt, the servants could be well provided for in this respect. And, if masters would try the experiment, I doubt not that comforters, made by tacking, in the manner of a mattress, bats of cotton, or which is fully as good and more convenient, refuse cotton, simply ginned for the purpose, and laid between two pieces of cloth, they would, in my judgment, find it cheaper than the ordinary mode of furnishing them with blankets; and would, beyond doubt, do more towards keeping them warm as covering for the beds.

As the subject of rainy day's work has been thus incidentally mentioned, I will make a slight digression to notice one or two things respecting this subject, and then return to the train of thoughts which I had in mind. It

may be worth while to remark, that the true farmer needs almost never to require his people to labor in the rain. All that is necessary, is to employ a little forecast in providing suitable work within doors, or, at least, under shelter. Without any design of being very specific, I may yet mention a few things that may be done to advantage at such times. Making of "*mattresses and comforters*," has already been mentioned, to which might be added, for the women, making of clothing, weaving, knitting, in which, particularly the last, even the children and older persons might be engaged ; whilst the men and larger boys might be occupied in repairing, *painting*,* and even making many of the more ordinary tools used upon the farm ; to which might be added, the grinding of axes, and many other small jobs, all of which require time to be performed ; and which, if not done in rainy weather, will certainly deduct from the labors of a fair day, either by hands being delayed to attend to it, or by working with a defective tool. .

In connection with this, I may say, further, that on large farms the making of shoes, much of which could be done on rainy days, and even of hats, or rather caps, for the men and boys, might be made decidedly profitable.

The hides and skins of wild animals, which could be easily collected about a farm, and which are, generally,

* My allusion to painting, will, perhaps, remind you of my propensity to dabble in "*lead and oil*," but I am assured any farmer will see his own by painting his tools, and many other things, even to the handle of a hoe or rake.

almost wasted, could thus be worked up greatly *to the advantage of the farm, and the comfort, and, consequently, the health of the people.*

But to return from this digression ; the miserable policy of allowing servants to go to their labor in rags, for want of comfortable clothing, and to employ the hours of Saturday night, almost to Sabbath morning, in washing those miserable garments ; then to lie down about half naked on Sunday, until these garments are dry, or put them on half dry, and thereby bring on rheumatic, and other acute or inflammatory diseases, I cannot speak of in terms of sufficient reprobation.

I am aware that the blacks are the most thoughtless and improvident of beings,—being lineal descendants in character, at least, of that pair of brothers spoken of by Solomon in Proverbs, xviii. 9 : one slothful, the other a great waster ; but, I am aware, too, that if proper clothing be provided, the authority of the master, together with the sentiment of self-respect, which most of them feel, will induce them to appear genteel.

I do not refer to this topic, because neglect in this respect is very general, but simply that I may express myself in reference to the bad economy displayed by some masters in regard to clothing, as also in regard to habitations.

A man had better hire out, or sell one or more of his hands, to raise means wherewith to clothe the remainder. He would procure more self-respect, more respect from his brother farmers, make better crops, and pay far less doctor's bill by so doing ; and I am sure these are con-

siderations sufficient to weigh with any man with sense enough to be a farmer.

Since your criticism of my attempts to expound and apply Scripture, I have been less disposed to venture into that line of things, but I have a passage in mind in reference to the point of which I am now treating, of the applicability of which I feel sure I am not mistaken. I think it is in the Epistle of St. James. The words are these:—"The hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth, and the cry is entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." Now, although the slave is not hired, yet there are certain things, which, in my judgment, the Almighty regards as hire, to wit:—Food, clothing, habitations, medicine, and attendance in sickness or old age, etc. etc.; and if these are kept back, it is an injustice, and so much the greater, as the poor slave has no appeal. Such "*keeping back by fraud*" is bad enough in one of us who make no pretensions to personal piety; but when it is done by those who profess to have imbibed the spirit of Him who went about doing good, I cannot express to you how much I abhor it. I do not say this from any feeling of disrespect to any religious man as such. No! God forbid! I have been reared from childhood to respect religion, religious things and religious people; and I hope no conduct in its professors, will ever induce in me any other sentiment. The inhumanity of some who bear the Christian name, towards these poor slaves, who, as I before said, have no redress, awakens in me feelings that I would not like to express, even to you. You, pro-

fessors of religion, are the ones to speak to each other on these matters. The Bible makes it your duty to exhort and admonish one another ; and, although I can say that I am glad you have sprung this discussion upon me, I still think there are of your brethren in the Church, for whom you might also feel concerned. As a farmer and a Southron, I boldly declare, that as long as such bad economy is practised, in even a few cases, it will be impossible to gag the abolitionists ; and Southern men ought to protest against all such bad economy, on the grounds that although a man is in some sense a sovereign at home, and on his own farm, still there is a sense in which we are mutually the keepers of the characters of each other. I know that fanatical men and women will rant against us, do as we will ; but then the duty of masters is to act so, that all such ranting shall be false. But not to be tedious, I close, and shall write you my views in regard to food in a few days.

Your affectionate brother,

JOSEPH L. MELVILLE.

Melville Cottage, January 3d, 18—.

DEAR WILLIAM,—

CHRISTMAS and New-Year's day being past, I now resume the series of topics in which I was engaged. Before proceeding, I determined to converse with my excellent neighbor, Mr. M., who is one of the neatest farmers in all my acquaintance. Indeed, my knowledge

of him and his arrangements, satisfied me that a description of his plan would express very clearly my views of what *ought to be*.

I remark, however, before entering upon the proposed description, that laboring persons require a good, even *abundant*, supply of solid substantial food, and of it a fair proportion of animal food. I am aware that the Irish peasantry eat but little meat, and yet labor hard, and, it is said, enjoy health; still, the black man is different, and he seems to need a different treatment; much may be due to climate, and the diseases incident thereto. With regard to the relative advantage of boarding servants in common, and giving them a weekly allowance, I do not undertake to decide for others, but believe the experience of all who have tried both, to be in favor of the former plan.

I am aware that many servants complain very much at being boarded at a common table, and some never will be satisfied. There are as queer crabsticks of humanity among the blacks as there are among the whites; but, as my motto is, "*the best modes of doing every thing*," when I have found out that best mode, I am not apt to be driven from my position by grumbling. Blacks, like all other uncultivated persons, are strongly attached to old customs. We have all heard of the Dutchman, who considered it a sufficient reason for carrying his grist to mill in one end of the bag, and a big stone in the other, because "*mine fader dit sho*." Whilst whites then, with better information, are so doggedly attached to old ways, we need not be surprised at the poor blacks

for following in their footsteps. I would, however, reason the case with them; and endeavor, as far as I could, by showing the advantages of boarding in common, to reconcile them to it. I would even compromise the point a little, by allowing them to take their suppers in their own houses.

It is but a dictate of common sense, however, to say, that after a servant has done his morning's work, he is not capable of cooking and eating his dinner in the usual noon-time, and then have leisure to rest preparatory to the labors of the afternoon.

In reference to the arrangements upon the farm of Mr. M——, I will give you as brief a description as is consistent with completeness. He, you are aware, boards his servants in common, and the longer he tries it, the better he is pleased. His arrangements are as follows:—His dining room for the servants, (which, on occasion, serves as a chapel,) and kitchen, are all under one roof. The boilers are set into brick work, and immediately in the rear; and connected with the same chimney is another large boiler, into which is thrown the refuse of vegetables, the bran, and other matters suitable for stock; and thus the cook can conveniently attend to both operations at the same time. I would remark, that this latter boiler serves another valuable purpose, in furnishing an abundant supply of hot water for various purposes, as washing their clothes, their persons, etc., etc.

A good garden, which Mr. M—— always manages to have, is valuable. Spring, summer and winter, his hands are supplied with such vegetables as are in season. Not

a very great variety, it is true, but abundant, such as they are. We were sitting in his piazza when I heard the " *tavern bell*," as it is called. Water is abundant (and of good quality,) for them to wash before they eat ; (and for all other purposes,) a thing I admired very much, for I believe with the Turks, that if cleanliness is not a moral virtue, still it is so near it, that it is very difficult to be virtuous and filthy. We walked to the " *tavern*," and saw them take their places, which they did " *decently and in order*," each one, as I was informed, having a particular place assigned as permanently his. They ate with no apparent haste, each one retiring when satisfied, without a regular dismissal, although they are accustomed to wait until a blessing is asked, before eating.

I observed an arrangement that I admire much, viz : a large shed, convenient to the dining room, furnished with rude benches, and there the servants either sat down to chat, or stretched themselves for a short nap, as they chose, but were not allowed to go to their houses.

Their " *siesta*,"* as I suppose it may be called, lasts from one hour to one hour and a half ; and, in long summer days, they have still more time at noon.

At the given signal, they all return to work, apparently almost as fresh as when they came out in the morning. The value of the afternoon's work must be greatly increased by this system.

There are, however, still some servants who prefer the

* Spanish word signifying afternoon's nap or rest.

old system, of throwing a slice of meat upon the coals ; and when burned up to a crisp, like the sole of an old boot, eating it with a hoe, or ash-cake, about half done, and some "*greens*," a little scalded. But, as I said, these are like some of the whites, "*behind the times*." Improvements will go on, and the world cannot stop, until such people awake from their slumbers. I am of the opinion, however, that this will become a general system, and that opposition will gradually die out.

I shall resume the subject soon, and, in my next, shall treat of arrangements for the sick, etc.

Your affectionate brother,

JOSEPH L. MELVILLE.

Melville Cottage, January 12th, 18—.

DEAR WILLIAM,—

ACCORDING to promise, I proceed to consider, in the present letter, arrangements for sickness, including proper accommodations for the comfort of the old and infirm ; also, of women and of children. I consider a hospital an indispensable appendage to every well-conducted farm, manufactory, or any other establishment, where slaves, or, indeed, any other human beings are assembled in considerable numbers. And, by a hospital here, I mean merely this—a more than ordinarily comfortable negro house ; so situated as regards location,

internal arrangements, and every other particular, as to be, at the same time, a convenient place for the sick, or lying-in servant ; and, also, convenient to be overlooked by the master, overseer, or any other, on whom that duty might devolve. I am aware that the first idea that strikes the mind of many a man is, that, with such convenient arrangements for sickness, we should always have some one sick, or pretending to be so. I confess that there is a considerable amount of complaining among servants that is merely feigned ; but, in answer to all the objections against the hospital, medicine chest, and all that class of accommodations, arising from a source like this, I would offer the following considerations :—First, a shrewd observer would soon detect such cases of feigned sickness ; and, in cases of detection, the deceiver would be laid under suspicion ever after ; and thus would, in the end, be more a loser than gainer by the operation. Secondly, that such a system of deception could never be carried on more than a few days by the same individual ; and the loss of a few days work, of a lazy servant, can never be a matter of so much consequence, as to weigh against the chances of a really sick and suffering one lacking such accommodations. And, thirdly, I am not so sure that such servants as feign sickness, might not be broken of their deceptive practices, by knowing that, as soon as they were unable to perform their daily labor, they must take up their residence in the hospital, and receive medical attendance. If such servants could be allowed to lounge about their own houses, they are willing enough, at times, to feign sickness ; but it be-

comes a very different affair, when they are to be sent to the hospital and take physie.

Yours, affectionately,

JOSEPH L. MELVILLE.

Melville Cottage, January 20th, 18—.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—

I NOW approach a branch of this subject, upon which it will be difficult to establish any thing like uniform sentiments and practices. I allude to what is technically called, among the blacks, "*our own time*." In addition to habitations, food, clothing, medicine, and medical attendance, black people expect, and, by a kind of conventional usage, almost demand, a number of little rights and privileges, which, although like the "common law," not referable to any positive enactments, are, like it, also of very binding influence. If any one wishes to try the strength of these informal concessions, let him attempt to take "*Christmas*" from them without a fair equivalent, and he will very probably be made to feel the force of public sentiment upon these points. One of the most effectual modes of inducing servants to perform their duties with cheerfulness, is to recognize all those little points; not, perhaps, as matters of right, but as concessions cheerfully made from the feeling of good will that exists between master and servant.

This "*time*" is employed by them in various ways, for the purpose of earning a few dollars with which to

purchase little articles, such as they may fancy—Sunday shoes or hat, an umbrella, or something that masters do not usually furnish. Of course, a kind and considerate master desires that their time may be made available to some useful end, and not frittered away in idleness or unproductive labor. In order that such may not be the results, I have known judicious planters to pursue a course like this. At the usual planting season, a certain portion of land is laid out for the servants, to be cultivated in something that will command cash when gathered in. A compact is then entered into with the hands, to have their crop worked and managed precisely as the masters crop ; the proceeds to be divided out according to the general deservings of each, including industry, good conduct, etc., etc. Such a plan will commend itself to the mind of a kind master, for many reasons ; and, among the most forcible, is, that it substitutes a consideration more ennobling than those too often employed as an incentive to action, viz :—the lash, scolding, etc. I leave to you the task of being the expositor of Scripture upon these matters ; but I think I have read, that as good and great a man as Moses, “had respect to the recompense of reward.” And, whilst I would scorn the idea of bribing servants or children, to do their duty, I would hold it not only as kind, but as a moral duty to reward those who did well, and all in proportion as they did well.

Whilst the thought is on my mind, and lest it should escape me in the proper place, I will remark, that although I have placed in my arrangement a chapter on

punishment, yet my system, so far as my crude conceptions may be called one, contemplates rather the prevention of the necessity of punishment, than the recommendation of any plans or modes of punishment. And, it is my opinion that some well devised system of rewards, would not only act as an incentive to industry and general good conduct, but the being deprived of those rewards for misconduct, might be rendered one of the most effectual modes of administering punishment. This manner of employing their own time, for their benefit, it will be readily seen, may be made a powerful auxiliary of this sort. Under this head, it might not be improper to remark, that a master is, as it were, laid under the necessity (in self-defence,) to afford them the requisite time for washing and mending their clothes, cleansing about their houses, and such little matters. In self-defence I say, for if such opportunities are not afforded, he will find himself at the head of a body of rag-muffins, of whom he would be ashamed, did he meet them upon the public highways.

But to return from this digression; when the crop is laid by, some planters hold a grand festival. Sheep and pigs, and other fatlings, are killed; and a bountiful, though not very *magnificent*, dinner is provided. Master, and mistress, and neighbors, and negroes assemble, and black and white are seen strung along the great table, like the keys of a piano; and, like the aforesaid instrument, the black keys make fully as much noise as the white; all mingle for a while in the utmost harmony and good feeling; many a merry joke goes round,

songs are sung, and all is rustic hilarity and mirth. Some old fellow rigs up a "*banjo*," or discourses music (not very Orphean, it is admitted,) from an old fiddle with sundry knots in the strings, or, like another Paganini, plays as well upon three, or, perchance, upon two; and some of the young fry get a pair of bones as "*castanets*," and "*Old Figinny*," "*Walk Jaw-bone*," and other airs, are performed for the amusement of "*missus and the children*."

Although I must confess that I have enjoyed such scenes, I clearly yield the palm of doing up these things in the most excellent style, to the servants of my esteemed friend, Mr. M——. He being himself a truly religious man, feels bound to set his face against some of the modes of enjoyment common amongst them, particularly that rude stamping of the ground, which, by a fiction of language, they call dancing. But, as every good and sensible man ought, he never denies them one gratification, without substituting another as good, or better. He takes considerable interest in their learning to sing, and well do they repay him for his trouble. I enjoyed extremely the spectacle of a choir of a dozen or twenty good voices, pouring forth, one after another, the most popular religious songs. It was really good music, and they sung with a "*vim*."

In whatever way, however, the annual festival is conducted, it is looked forward to with pleasing anticipations. It lightens many a task; and as the time of "*laying by the crop*" is apt to be a season of increased labor, that increase of labor is performed with more

cheerfulness, as it is preparatory to the "*big dinner.*"

There is one thing that renders this an effectual means of operating upon them, viz :—the knowledge that it is a mere gratuity, to be bestowed or withheld at the pleasure of the master, and to be regulated entirely according to their deservings, and not like Christmas, a thing of such long standing, as to have become one of the conventional laws of master and servant.

It may be as appropriate in this, as in any other place, to say that I have seldom, or never, known a judicious master, who did not consider it decidedly injurious for servants to be allowed to roam at large, either on holidays, or at other times ; wisdom and benevolence both dictate, that with servants, as with children, their appropriate enjoyments should, as far as possible, be provided for them at home ; make home happy and comfortable, and they will, both servants and children, be contented, and, consequently, far more happy when at home ; but let the opposite feeling be indulged, and like all other stimulants, it must be administered stronger every day, to afford the accustomed enjoyment.

You have only to turn your attention to this thing, to be convinced of the justice of these remarks.

I shall in my next, proceed to take up the topics of overseers and punishment, (or rather the best modes of avoiding punishment,) which I shall send you in the course of a few days.

Affectionately yours,

JOSEPH L. MELVILLE.

Melville Cottage, January 25th, 18—.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,—

ACCORDING to promise, I now take up that important branch of this subject, which relates to overseers. The station of this class of men seems not very accurately defined. Perhaps it is rather undefinable. Without attempting to specify, I remark, that like most other employments, it derives its respectability, or the want of it, more from the moral character of the man by whom the duties are performed, than from any thing indispensably connected with the office.

An impression rests on many minds, that there is in the very duties of an overseer, that which must degrade, and, perhaps, demoralize a man. Of course, all men will claim to judge for themselves upon this class of questions, but I cannot see how the most disagreeable of these duties, say that of chastising a servant, may not be done as an official act, and from a sense of duty, just as the high Sheriff (an officer of undoubted respectability) is compelled by virtue of his office, even to hang one. So far as the pain and mortification is concerned, I (though entirely unaccustomed to all such duties,) would prefer to chastise one hundred, rather than hang one ; and yet I, nor indeed any other right minded man, would shrink from either act, did the interests of society demand it.

That the duties of the Sheriff can be, and often are performed by proxy, is nothing to the question, for the same is true of these ; if there is degradation in the act,

it attaches to the office, whether the act be performed by proxy or not, or whether it be performed at all. The truth appears to be that the degradation consists not in the act itself, but in the temper in, or with which the act is performed; and that my reasoning is correct is obvious, from the fact that many respectable farmers choose to be their own overseers, and do all the duties pertaining thereto, and yet are considered respectable by the best classes among us.

You may imagine that I am attaching undue importance to this apparently abstract question; a question which we might suppose belongs more to works on etiquette and fashion, but I conceive that the subject has a practical bearing, which renders it of no little consequence in a discussion like this; for could overseers be impressed generally with the truth, that if they are deficient in standing among the better classes of society, it is not for any thing in the office or station of an overseer, but for immoral or otherwise unbecoming conduct, it would do much towards elevating this class of men; a result, in my estimation, of sufficient importance to justify some organized and systematic effort on the part of farmers generally.*

* Whenever the public becomes sufficiently alive to the true interests of the country to engage in the establishment of "*model farms*," either by joint stock companies, or through the aid and co-operation of government, that will, doubtless, be "*the organized effort*," which will furnish the right kind of men; for, in addition to such a farm, being the agent for settling a multitude of important questions as regards farming and husbandry, and

The next point naturally demanding attention, is *the prerogatives of the overseer*.

The overseer generally regards himself as a kind of viceroy, and his powers he considers plenipotentiary. And, indeed, it seems indispensable that a considerable power be delegated to him, or he can plead (and with justice too,) the want of it, as an excuse for bad management. Such excuses can be effectually cut off only by making his powers equal to his responsibilities. It is certainly surrendering much, very much—but still not so much as men surrender to attorneys, and other agents, when they confide their estates to them ; to physicians, when they confide their lives to them ; not so much by thousands as they surrender to teachers, when they confide the characters and destinies of their children, perhaps for time, and for eternity, to their hands.

It is obvious that all agents must be confided in. But, in proportion to the importance of the trust, and the facilities for mal-practice, should a principal scrutinize

also furnishing the best specimens of seeds, animals, etc., etc., such an institution, if properly conducted, must send forth a supply of well-informed and practical young men, who would fill, with ability and success, this important branch of industry. Indeed, to express my sense of the importance of this subject, viz :—the rearing up a class of intelligent, moral and industrious young men for these stations, I am satisfied that should the government ever undertake such an establishment as a "*model farm*," and it should accomplish nothing more than this, it would, in itself, be a fair equivalent for any expense the farm might be to the country.

the character of one whom he proposes to employ. And, in this case, as in the cases of the lawyer, physician and teacher, the means of protection from abuses are precisely the same, viz: an instant dissolution of the connection, as soon as a discovery is made of intentional betrayal of confidence.

This leads me to the annunciation of the principles, which I conceive should govern a master in the selection of an overseer; although I am aware that this principle will be unpopular with some. What you long ago remarked, "*that the real interest of the master and the interest of the servant, must always coincide, and can never differ,*" if not an axiom, is a clearly established principle in farming economy. And, as I know, that it is not to the interest of the *servants* that the overseer be employed with reference to his making by any, and all means, the largest crop, I infer most assuredly that it cannot be for the real, however it may be for the apparent, interest of the *master*.

I would make the following suggestions:—Find a man of truly virtuous principles; industrious, careful and prudent; humane in his disposition, strictly honest and truthful; and when such an one is found, spare no pains to attach him permanently to you. If a single man, encourage him—by the offer of a permanent situation, and any other advantages you may be able—to marry.* Give him distinctly to understand what course of con-

* The reasons for this are of a nature too delicate to comment upon, but far too important to be passed over in silence.

duct, what personal character and principles in himself will please, and what will not. Let him know that the possession of right principles is an indispensable. The very idea of placing, or retaining a man in a situation that gives such unbounded control over servants, who is himself immoral, or who would corrupt those committed to his charge, is too abhorrent to be borne. Such a man should not be retained ; no, not a day, nor an hour.

Such a man (as I have above described,) will, one year with another, make as good crops, as he ought in justice to the servants to make ; and no man ought to be expected, nor is it sound economy to make more. If more (all things considered) than a fair crop is made, it is like all other unfair operations—an evidence of dishonesty somewhere ; and will, in the end, work disadvantage rather than profit. Overseers, however, when they overwork the people for sake of a large crop, often do it with the feeling that they are but carrying out the wishes of the master ; perhaps, in this, they are sometimes not mistaken, but a prudent and benevolent master, will not neglect to define his position in such matters, with great exactness.

The question may be asked, how and where is a supply of such overseers as I have described to be found, or their services to be obtained ? I answer, precisely how and where faithful agents are to be obtained for the transaction of other branches of business. There is a law of political economy, that is not much, if any less, to be relied upon than the laws that govern the material universe, viz :— “ *that supply is always in proportion*

to demand." If then the question be, *by what means can a supply of such overseers as I have described be obtained?* I answer, BY CREATING A DEMAND FOR THEM. Let it be understood and established, that the demand is for a particular description of men, *and for no other*. If, however, immoral, profane and licentious men can compete successfully with the virtuous and moral, and, perchance, be preferred, on the ground that they can, by inhumanity to the servants, make a better crop, it need not be a matter of astonishment, if a better class of men is difficult to find. But let the course I have recommended be pursued; let masters give preference to the better class of men, and if it does not hold good that the supply is in proportion to the demand, then POLITICAL ECONOMY IS NO SCIENCE.

Very respectfully, your affectionate brother,
JOSEPH L. MELVILLE.

Melville Cottage, January 25th, 18—.

DEAR WILLIAM,—

HAVING remarked upon all the other topics that I considered of importance, I will close my series of letters by a few observations concerning punishment, bearing in mind, however, that my system proceeds upon the principle of prevention, rather than cure. Solomon, when he wrote the Book of Proverbs, seemed to regard the day when the rod could be laid aside with safety, as in the dim and shadowy future. Whether it can be more

safely laid aside now than then, is what I will not undertake to determine ; but there are certainly principles in the black race, which, if appealed to with proper motives, would save the necessity of much of the punishment, which by some is regarded as indispensable.

Should punishment, however, be necessary, I would recommend, that like all other duties, it be performed AS A DUTY, and performed well.

By being performed as a duty, I mean that it should be performed with due deliberation—with no appearance of haste, and never when it is attended with the slightest emotion of its being agreeable to the master to inflict it.

The course I recommend is about as follows :—I would satisfy myself that the servant was really deserving of punishment, by inquiring particularly and deliberately into the circumstances of the case. I would then (in private) administer a serious and faithful admonition. Should this prove unavailing, I would then (also in private) proceed to administer such a punishment, as in my judgment would work the cure of the offender. And when I had done, it should be with the feeling that it would not be necessary to punish that person again—at least very soon.

With my children, I reason thus :—If the amount of punishment necessary for the entire cure of the offender be represented by any quantity, (as x) and I administer any part thereof less than the full amount necessary to the cure, and then, through false tenderness, desist and leave the patient uncured, I look upon myself as having

inflicted upon that individual that much of unnecessary cruelty. And it is my experience, that a servant left in that condition, i. e. partially humbled, is in a worse condition to be reformed than if he had never been undertaken. Duty, kindness, humanity, all, therefore, demand that the remedy be applied until the cure is affected; otherwise, in all probability, the same painful process will be necessary again, and, perhaps, frequently. There are masters who have but little trouble, because their punishments are of so serious a nature, that a servant does not like to incur the risk of receiving one; and when they do receive one, they never feel like risking another. I have no doubt that a course something like this, results in far less punishment in the end.

Punishment, to be a reformatory agent, must be made to resemble, as nearly as possible, the laws of the material Universe, at least, so far as absolute certainty of sequence is concerned. Man, in proportion to his ignorance and inexperience, is disposed to flatter himself with the hope of impunity; to guard against this spirit of self-deception, the punishment should follow with absolute certainty, unless there be good and sufficient reasons for the exercise of clemency.

There is one injunction of Saint Paul that has always struck me with force, "*forbear threatening.*" The most efficient government is that which is, as I just now remarked, the most uniform and certain; and, I now add, the most noiseless and quiet. The mighty forces that govern the material Universe, are never heard—still there is not a moment in which every particle of matter

does not feel them ; and as human governments approximate this absolute perfection, I have an idea that they will possess this feature ; and Sovereigns, Governors, Parents and Masters, will learn the wisdom of that divine injunction, "FORBEAR THREATENING."

Having now concluded what I have thought necessary to say, I close by observing that I am really obliged that you drew me into this correspondence. I have had ideas, which before were floating indistinctly in my mind, reduced to a more definite form. And, if in looking over these letters, you see where my system is essentially defective, I trust you will, with the freedom of a brother, point out those things ; for, if I am not doing my duty to my blacks, *and my whole duty*, I know that it is not the part of wisdom to shut ones eyes to the truth. I not only grant you the privilege, but I request it as a thing to which, in some sense, I may say I have a right ; for, as you have thrown upon me so large a part of this discussion, I think something is due me in return.

Very respectfully yours,

JOSEPH L. MELVILLE.

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—, — — *th*, —.

DEAR BROTHER,—

YOUR request and demand is so reasonable, and withal accords so entirely with my own feelings, that I shall not think of refusing to comply.

With regard to the matter of your letters, and the
 mode of treating the subject, I say * * *
 * * * * *

Still I am compelled, in candor and love, to assure you, that in my judgment they fall short of a complete system, and I am astonished that a man of your penetration has not, long ago, seen that all this concerns the slave as a mere physical being; and, so far as he is possessed of an immortal nature, he is, by your otherwise excellent system, wholly unprovided for. The only explanation that I can imagine why you have not seen this, is that it is so general for masters to go no farther than you go; and, indeed, so few go as far, that it is, on the whole, less a matter of surprise than at first it might appear.

It is, then, to that class of duties which your system overlooks, that I propose to call your attention, and right glad will I be, if I shall succeed as well in setting forth the duties of masters to their servants as moral beings, as you have set forth his duties to them as physical beings.

Hoping to enter upon this work soon,

I am, most fraternally, yours,

WILLIAM R. MELVILLE.

MY DEAR BROTHER JOSEPH,—

IN discussing the duties of masters to their servants as moral beings, I wish, in time, to assure you that it is not my purpose to enter into the region of impossibilities, like the thousand and one inventors of *the perpetual*

motion, who have contrived very pretty machines, but liable to the small objection that they will not work. I shall endeavor to restrict myself to such things as any master can do, provided he has a proper sense of his duty to his servant, as a being responsible to God for his conduct; and, I may add, what I feel assured he will be a happier man for doing.

When, however, I assert that I believe that all the duties I have in mind are practicable, I may have views which it is necessary that I explain; and, to make this necessary explanation, I now suspend briefly the annunciation and reasoning upon the duties themselves. The views to which I have reference, are the peculiar characteristics of the black race, or rather that branch of it with which we are connected; unless I have studied them improperly, they are possessed of certain peculiarities, more or less strongly marked, which, being properly understood, may be operated upon to the advantage greatly, not only of themselves, but also of their masters.

That there are strong national peculiarities impressed upon men, is a truth so well understood, that no man who has been to any extent an observer of such things, can have reason a moment to doubt. And that branches and subdivisions of nations, have a peculiar type of their own in many instances, is also well and generally known. The American branch of the Anglo-Saxon has its strongly marked features, so as to exhibit elements of character totally unlike any other on the face of the earth.

The precise question now before us is,—are there any

marks of nationality impressed upon the American branch of the great African or black race? And, if so, are they of such a nature as to afford just and reasonable grounds for believing that they can be used as leverage, to assist in their moral and spiritual elevation?

You formerly complimented me, by admitting that I had fully convinced you that "*the first great duty of masters is to study the duties of masters, with a view to their performance.*" Could I now convince you that the next great duty of masters is to study the peculiarities of the black race, with a view to their moral elevation, I should feel that I had not labored in vain. I solicit, then, a candid hearing upon this subject, and I shall endeavor to bear faithfully in mind the sentiments with which I originally set out, viz:—"that the whole of this discussion is adapted to promote the welfare of servants, the happiness of masters, and the peace and harmony of our beloved country."

The first of these peculiarities, which I think affords a means of their moral elevation, is that feeling of child-like dependance and leaning upon their masters, which is well known as one of the elements in their nature,—a disposition to confide in his judgment—to look to him for protection; and, when it is to any extent cultivated, a feeling of affectionate trust. A colored man, who had extensive intercourse with them, and who had had occasion to study their peculiarities, with no little interest remarked, "*they are always children.*"

This I consider one of the most characteristic descriptions that I ever remember to have heard, especially to be couched in so few words.

That the feelings of which I now speak are characteristic of this people, might be made plain by a multitude of illustrations. The failure of the Abolitionists to abduct them, and their return to their masters, in many cases, when abducted, are among the known facts that go conclusively to establish the existence of such feelings as those to which I refer. Let any who may still be sceptical upon this point, institute suitable experiments, and he may receive abundant evidence of the propriety of these remarks. Compare the native or aboriginal inhabitant of this country, and see how strongly this feeling is exhibited by such a contrast. An Indian to the third or fourth generation, often retains his high toned and independent bearing, and his abhorrence of the white man, as the possessor of the graves of his forefathers. But where do we hear of such exhibition of feeling on the part of our colored people? It is true that such feelings are often manifest in native Africans; but, in the American branch of the great African family, I am not aware that such feelings are ever exhibited.

The point immediately before us now, is what advantage does this peculiarity afford for the moral elevation of this people? The answer is plain. Precisely as this child-like confidence, so kindly bestowed upon our children, affords abundant facilities for *their* elevation and improvement, so does the possession of these qualities by servants, those who are "*always children*," afford the same facilities for *their* elevation and improvement.

We advise, and instruct, and admonish our children in regard to their moral duties; let us, in like manner, advise, instruct and admonish them.

I am aware that Solomon has said, that “a servant will not be corrected by words,” neither will a child, in many instances ; but, if the punishment is made the last alternative with servants, as it is with children, perhaps we should find that they would oftener be corrected by words than we imagine.

Again—that same wise man has said, “*He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child shall have him become his son at the length;*” and, it may be imagined, that I am recommending a system, the very one that he so emphatically condemns—but such is far from my meaning. Petting and spoiling is the most direct mode of inflicting unhappiness that I have ever known ; I regard it as refinement in barbarity, and I do not remember to have seen a pet that was not unhappy, from a child’s pet kitten, to a petted servant or child ; all, all, are unhappy. I only recommend that a principle so powerful as this, should be employed with wisdom and prudence, for the moral elevation of servants, just as the analogous feelings are employed for the elevation of our children.

The practicability of what I say, the manner of doing it, and the happy consequences resulting, are all most forcibly illustrated in multitudes of instances among the older families in our Southern country—where there are servants, not a few, who would face death itself, in the most horrid forms, for the sake of that master whom they love as a father, or a brother ; servants who, did bitter-hearted men ever succeed in exciting a servile war among us, would take up arms, and march to the field of blood and carnage, under the banners of their masters.

The next element in the character of this people, to which I propose to call attention, is the feeling of SELF-RESPECT. I am aware that the annunciation of this topic will excite a smile upon many a countenance. Such persons, as little as they believe it, entirely misunderstand the true character of the negro. I have not set out to jest over this subject, and I shall, therefore, undertake seriously to show that the feeling of self-respect is emphatically impressed upon the character of this people, at least sufficiently so to afford a basis upon which to erect an effectual bulwark of moral culture.

According to the doctrine of forces, a power is estimated by the resistance it is able to overcome; or, with a known resistance, by the force retained, after having overcome. Apply this principle here, and, if I am not mistaken, we shall see an upward action decidedly emphatic.

Besides, in estimating the strength of this feeling, we are to bear in mind that it is an emotion almost entirely of spontaneous growth. Indeed, not only is it uncultivated, but there are certain blighting influences set in action, sometimes intentionally, sometimes inadvertently, which check its growth most sadly. How seldom is there any systematic efforts to infuse into them a sense of honor and self-respect; and, when they manifest the existence of such feelings, how often is it inadvertently made the subject of merriment.

Did we rear our children thus, what would we have reason to expect of them? In truth, so far from denying the existence of such a feeling, we need rather be

amazed that its actings are strong enough to exhibit itself at all under the discouraging circumstances to which it is sometimes exposed.

Let masters, and all who exert an influence over them, adopt a style of speaking *to* them, and *of* them, which will inspire them with the feeling, that a man may have a black skin, (the blacker the better,*) and be a slave, and yet may scorn a low or base action as much as his master, or any other man. Let them be admonished, that base conduct degrades a man or woman, not only in the estimation of the whites, but in the estimation of their own class; let them be encouraged to instil such sentiments into the minds of their children, and many a severe reprimand, and many an application of the lash, may be spared.

As an instance in point, illustrative of what may thus be effected, I have now in mind a woman, whom I screened from a public exposure for some petty crime of pilfering, and who has ever since manifested such a sense of obligation for the favor thus shown, that I am satisfied that I can control her by this feeling of gratitude far more successfully than it could be done by the lash; and, on a subsequent occasion, when threatened with public punishment, she came to me, and falling upon her knees, offered to submit to any infliction I might think proper, if I would only screen her from public exposure and disgrace.

*The anecdote of the old woman, who boasted that in her neighborhood they were "*all black*," is a fine illustration of this feeling.

The next great characteristic of this people, and that which, more than any other, lays the foundation for their moral elevation, is the religious element that so strongly distinguishes them. There is no need of reasoning to prove the existence of this sentiment. The man who doubts or denies on this point, avows his entire unacquaintance with the psychological character of this people.

Their religion partakes not much of forms and ceremonies—it is an engagement of their feelings. A preacher who throws into his discourses a large proportion of impassioned language, and especially of real feeling, can scarcely fail to be *their preacher* ; indeed, they are more in danger of being carried into excesses by this, than by almost any other cause.

They are eminently a religious people—they love religion, and it is to them often the greatest, even sometimes their only, enjoyment. The negro is a great singer, and he sings religious songs in preference to any others ; indeed, unless now and then a comic song, often, as I suspect, falsely attributed to them, they sing but few others. They sing at their work, at their homes, on the highway, and in the streets ; and, in the large majority of cases, their songs have a decidedly religious character. How common to see an old woman at her work, "*lining out*" a hymn to herself, and then singing it in a spirit of rapt abstraction from earth and all earthly things. Many of them, when very angry, have prudence, if not piety enough, to go alone, and sing some spiritual song, not always, it is admitted, in a very spiritual state

of mind; but still, far more commendable than, like their superiors, (?) to give vent to their angry feelings in a torrent of bitter invective.

There is no doubt, that in many instances, this sentiment or emotion is nothing more than mere exhilaration of feeling, induced by sympathy of a large concourse, or sympathy of song, of which they are so excessively fond, or some other incidental circumstance. In some cases, when combined with great self-esteem and superstition, it becomes an apt resemblance of some of the rhapsodies of the Baron Von Sweidenbourg.* But, in other instances, we find points of experience, with no pretensions to the marvellous, but a pure rapture of religious feeling, not unlike that of the Apostle, when he found it difficult to decide whether he was in or out of the body.

But not to pursue this theme, enough has been said to show, 1st:—that it is one of the most strongly marked elements in their character, and from their evident tendency to run into the marvellous, and even superstition in its worst forms, it is most obviously an important part of a master's duty, to have this sentiment cultivated with care and assiduity.

* Says an old woman, whom I attempted to reason out of her views, in reference to such matters as her "*travels*," "Oh, sir, *you* hav'nt got along that far yet in experience;" and this was said with so sincere and earnest expression of countenance, as to set one involuntarily upon contriving a hypothesis, by which the old woman's experience could be reconciled with Scripture.

I am aware that this very feature of their character,—which I am attempting to show may be made one of the most efficient agents in the moral elevation of the blacks—is regarded by many masters as among their most objectionable features. The remark is often made, and carelessly, sometimes by religious masters, that religious servants are less useful and reliable than those of the opposite character. When such remarks are made, as an expression of hostility to religion itself, we understand perfectly how to regard them : but as they are sometimes made by persons whom we could not imagine capable of such feelings, then for religion's own sake, if not for the sake of *religious servants*, such remarks ought to be explained. The explanation, I imagine, would be, that by “religious servants,” are meant “church members ;” and, by irreligious servants, such as are not so—no trifle of a difference in an age like this.

As the remark, then, is made in reference merely to hypocritical professors of religion, it is sufficient to say, in reply, that unless we could make a fairer showing among ourselves, who are so much better instructed, and surrounded with far better religious influences, we are scarcely to be regarded as generous, in making such sweeping denunciations against the whole body of “*religious servants*”—a people who have not a tithe of the religious advantages we enjoy.

And are religious masters and mistresses quite sure, that many of the little peccadilloes in religion, practised by their servants, are not copied from themselves. If a “religious” (?) mistress drills her house-maid or fille-de-

chambre, to answer at the door "*not at home*," when she merely means not prepared to receive company, is she not demanding too much of that uncultivated servant, to expect that *she* shall be able to make such nice distinctions, and, like her mistress and *Sir Hudibras*, "*to split a hair 'twixt north and north-west side*."

Having thus, I confess, rather elaborately, I hope not tediously, set forth my views, in reference to those features of character, upon which I would mostly rely, in attempting the moral elevation of this people, I will bring this letter to a close, by remarking, that properly to appreciate the advantages thus placed in our hands, let us imagine them possessed not of these, but of different, and, perhaps, of opposite sentiments. Suppose them to hand down, from generation to generation, the sense of the wrong inflicted upon them in their being brought to this country, then, indeed, we should be laid under almost insuperable difficulties, in attempting their improvement; or, suppose them not possessed of that self-respect, amounting often to real pride of character, but of its opposite, that leaden nature that marks some of the down-trodden and miserable beings of the old world. Again—suppose, where we find the negro possessed of high religious sentiments, we found him the victim of some form of irreligion or wild idolatry, bloody and cruel, which he cherishes deep within the centre of his affections, as a thing most sacred and dear. I say, in view of such suppositions as these, we must see the very great advantages these sentiments and principles afford, in the effort to elevate them morally and religiously. I

shall, in my next, enter upon the main point I have in view, viz :—the system I would recommend for the religious welfare of the slave population in the South.

Your affectionate brother,

WILLIAM R. MELVILLE.

—————, —————, 18—.

MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,—

IN pursuance of the design expressed in my last, I now address you upon those duties that masters owe their servants as moral beings ; beings, with themselves, accountable to a righteous and holy God ; and who must, ere long, stand before that God, not then in the relation of master and servant, but upon the same broad platform—where the king and the beggar, the rich man and Lazarus, the great men and the chief captains, and the mighty men, must all stand. I approach this subject, not as one of trifling moment, but as one involving vast, even infinite consequences. I am aware, too, my dear brother, that there are circumstances that are well adapted to lead you to improper conclusions upon this subject, and cause you to rest satisfied in what you are doing, supposing that this is your duty, even your whole duty.

The contentment and apparent happiness of your people, leads naturally to a conclusion like this. In seeing their smiling countenances, their good condition, their merry laugh, you will naturally feel, that if you are not doing your duty, who is ? Indeed, a sentiment like this

is expressed in one of your letters, viz :—"there is scarcely one who does not laugh more, and sigh less, than you yourself do." Let me remind you, dear brother, that all this only proves that one great class of duties is well performed ; but, do they, in all that they express of contentment, have any just conceptions of their relations to God ? I know that you can look at many a farm, and see how far short masters of your acquaintance fall of doing what you do. But does this, I again ask, prove any thing more, than that duties to them, as physical beings, are properly performed ?

But need I remind you that the body, the mere physical being, is neither all of the man, nor even the more important part. How often have I heard you express your admiration of that fine answer of Socrates to his friends, when asked "*how he would be buried*," in which he assured them that the body was not the man, but the immortal and undying principle within, was that which constituted him a man.

Is the negro less than a man ? or his soul less worthy our regard ? The Son of God placed more value upon a soul, a single soul, than upon this earth, with all its wealth and pomp ; and yet, how strangely, do we overlook a thing of such infinite moment. I would say more, but my heart is full, when I contemplate the thought that there are kind masters, generous and indulgent men, who, from this strange oversight, neglect the souls of their most faithful and devoted servants ;—servants who love them as well almost as their own lives ;—servants who would rise with cheerfulness, to

serve them, at the midnight hour ;—servants who, if their masters were sick, would give no sleep to their eyes, nor slumber to their eyelids, as long as they could afford the smallest assistance ;—servants who would start, at a moment's warning, and undertake any thing, however perilous, even to the risk of life itself, to serve the master that they love—and who, yet, are compelled to feel, “my master is kind and good ;” he does all for his people that is possible to make them happy in this world ; but, ah ! my master cares not for our poor souls.

Let them be properly instructed, and, more than all, let masters convince them that their matrimonial alliances are, and will be, respected, in the matter of buying and selling ; and, I am well persuaded, that the tone of their own feelings will be materially changed upon this subject. Of all the wrongs attributed to masters, and they are charged with many, I know of none more revolting to my own mind, and, withal, fraught with more disastrous consequences, than this of recklessly separating husband and wife. As much as I feel at seeing children and parents separated, (and such scenes are truly heart-rending,) I still feel that there is not such violence done to the better feelings of the heart ; and, withal, the consequences are incomparably less demoralizing than those resulting from the separation of husbands from their wives.

To use the language of a distinguished and honored friend upon this subject, “THESE (MARRIAGE AND THE SABBATH) ARE GOD'S TWO GREAT INSTITUTIONS, DESCENDED FROM PARADISE ;” and, I would add, in the name of

humanity, let us secure these two blessings, at least, to the slave population of the South.

I am aware that masters feel easy upon this subject, because the blacks themselves regard it as a matter of so little moment; but, it is to be borne in mind, that they are an uncultivated people, and if their views are lax, the more the pity; we, however, who know the teachings of heaven upon this subject, and the direful consequences resulting from loose principles here, should make it our conscientious endeavor to give them right views in regard to it.

How easy for any intelligent master to set this thing in its true light before them, in some meeting for religious worship; indeed, if he did no more than to read to them those passages of Scripture referring to the subject, which he could find at any time by the help of a concordance and reference Bible, or any intelligent minister could furnish him with—I say, if he did no more than read these, it would, of itself, bring the subject before them in a most impressive manner. But if, in addition to the reading, he should either attempt, or procure a minister, to impress them with the obligations they are under, to obey the divine teachings, we might reasonably expect the best of consequences. Instances where this has been done have come under my notice, and the results have been precisely as I have stated, viz:—an increased conscientiousness upon the subject, and an entire change in their conduct.

It is not a mark of an able logician to offer more than a sufficient reason for any thing, and I feel well satisfied

that the treatment their matrimonial relations have received, is quite enough to account for any seeming indifference they may manifest upon the subject. Let full and sufficient assurances be afforded by masters, that their matrimonial vows will be respected, and then it will be full time enough to lay the blame of these immoralities at their (the servants) door.

Having instructed them properly in the nature of marriage, and thereby grouped them into families, I would then proceed to operate upon them, both individually and in masses, by means of the family compact.

In regard to this, as a moral agent, I would remark, let any man contemplate the influence of the family upon himself—its endearments, its restraints, its thousands of indescribable enjoyments—and does he not feel that it is an agency second almost to none, in the moral elevation and improvement of the human race. Fools and wits are sometimes found, who can make such things as MARRIAGE and THE FAMILY, the butt of their ridicule; but all good and wise men regard them as forming the foundation upon which the virtue and morality of a people must ever be expected to stand.

I consider the grouping of them into families as so important, that I should not rest satisfied until I found every individual identified in whole, or in part, with some family. This, perhaps, could conveniently be done upon that most natural of all principles, relationship, either by affinity or consanguinity.

Once properly grouped into families, I would proceed by appealing to the best principles of which I found

them possessed, or with which I found myself able to inspire them, to attempt their elevation, by establishing among them a virtuous public sentiment. You are aware that this thing, *public sentiment*, is at least the principle upon which one man acquires and maintains an ascendancy over masses of his fellow men, large or small; and, whether it be a family of servants, a family of children, or a nation, no man is able to maintain an ascendancy over the subjects of government any longer than public sentiment is on his side. Let a master awaken this feeling in his people, and let that sentiment speak out, on the side of virtue, good order, and piety. Let parents be encouraged to instil these principles into their children; and that people, even without the aid of literature, will rapidly become a virtuous and moral people.

One of the most difficult questions connected with this whole inquiry, here suggests itself; and, as it ought to be fairly met somewhere, I will introduce it in this place, as appropriate, perhaps, as any other. It is the question of their being allowed to have companions upon plantations distinct from their own. You have expressed yourself as convinced of the extensive evils resulting from their being permitted to roam at large, (when not engaged in the duties of their station.) This question, however, did not properly come under consideration in your letters; and I now express my approbation of the general tenor of your thoughts and sentiments under this head;—and, as far as I am prepared to give an opinion, I am free to say, that so much am I convinced of the injurious consequences of roaming at

large, at night, on Sabbaths, and on holidays, that I would not hesitate to apply these principles to the question in hand. My experience is, that human nature, in its fallen condition, is far more apt to conceive of, or embrace evil, than good;—and all my observations upon human beings, in masses, go to convince me, that unless some powerful counteracting agency is in operation to prevent, all assemblages are more apt to produce evil than good; to cause men to become immoral rather than virtuous. For reasons like these, I would never consent to allow my children to rove at will, to visit promiscuously, and where they chose;—and, acting upon the principle of my old black friend, "*they are always children*," I would recommend the same concerning servants; I would advise a master to sell, or buy, until the thing is set right; and, when once set right, I would leave no means untried to keep it so. It would, I confess, be attended with great inconvenience, at first; but, on the whole, with far less than the opposite custom. One feature of this roving system, which convinces me that it must be exceedingly demoralizing, is, that it is carried on to such an extent on the Lord's day. A Sabbath-breaking people, just as a licentious people, must become increasingly immoral; and the statistics of crime show this (Sabbath breaking) to be a parent vice, and its brood is "LE-GION." I would, for this reason, guard this point, as one of the strong-holds of my religious influence over them.

I have said that they are eminently a religious people, still they need a world of religious instruction,

otherwise this very element serves to engender superstition and a multitudinous train of evils, on the same principle that a fruitful soil rears a luxuriant crop of rank and noxious weeds, when left uncultivated. And here I take the liberty to remark, that, in my conception, it is not common honesty, however it may bear the semblance of extraordinary piety, for masters to take the proceeds of the labor of these poor blacks, to send the gospel to the far distant heathen, when, as Randolph, of Roanoke, said, "the Greeks are at the door;" when there is, perhaps, not a missionary, or religious teacher, provided for the instruction of these poor slaves.

Not that I would for a moment be understood that the former should not be done—and, done, too, with vastly more of zeal and energy than it ever has been; but I mean to assert, as the Scriptures say—"These ought ye to have done, and not leave the other undone."

I say again, and with emphasis, that it may procure for masters the reputation of most amazing benevolence, but that it is "*rendering to servants that which is just and equal*," I am far from believing. The divinely appointed rule is emphatic—"The husbandman that laboreth must be the first partaker," and "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn,"—a rule that commends itself to the common sense and common feelings of mankind; and, yet, a rule concerning which the Apostle felt the necessity of praying at the annunciation of it—"The Lord give the understanding;" a prayer that I feel the necessity of being offered, even on behalf of my excellent brother, and many other excel-

lent and kind-hearted masters, who strangely overlook the duty of supplying their servants with proper religious instruction.

Yes, my brother, from my soul, I pray—"The Lord give thee (and all like thee) understanding," on this truly important point.

As regards the amount and kind of religious instruction, of course that will come under the decision of the master, according to his judgment of the necessities of his people—a judgment enlightened, however, by the word of God. I feel at liberty to make a remark here, in regard to the whole supply of religious instruction in many parts of the country, especially out of the towns.

The system of "once a month" preaching, and three Sabbaths of neglect, which originated in the sparseness of the population, and the fewness of ministers in the early settlement of the country, it is to be feared, is becoming entailed upon us, as a settled policy. Indeed, I believe there are settlements of people who would consider it unjust and unwarrantable for a minister to inflict more than one meeting upon them each month. Let such white persons slumber on, if they will pertinaciously refuse to understand that the command is, "*six days shalt thou labor, but the seventh is the Sabbath*;" but, I unhesitatingly assert, that preaching, "once a month," is not enough for our colored population. Under this system, these poor creatures are starving for the bread of life, at the very time that they are professedly supplied. I am aware that their own conduct has a tendency to discourage many a well-meaning master, who, when he

has made the very best arrangement for them, of which the circumstances will admit, finds that he has been literally casting pearls before swine. They trample their religious privileges under their feet. What, then! Are they to be abandoned to perdition, because they did not show a proper estimate for gospel privileges, when those privileges were offered them? Where is the people that has?

Again—upon the doctrine of my old friend, “*they remain children*,” I would remark, that we constrain our children to attend the house of God for purposes of religious worship, and why not them?

To continue the remark, in regard to the amount and kind of religious instruction, I feel that nearly all that subject has yet to be studied; experiments are being made, and with the happiest results; and the more the subject is discussed, the more will the light shine into the minds of masters.

This much we may venture with safety to affirm, that the religious instruction, which is to benefit the black man, must be adapted to his character, condition, and style of thinking;—that religious instruction, to be beneficial, must be understood, is a mere truism; and, yet, how strangely is this simple truth overlooked, in the attempts to communicate religious instruction to the negroes. How much is there, of what is called preaching, that is entirely beyond their capacity to understand? All attempts to instruct them should be simple and easy of comprehension; but, in this remark, my allusion is more to language than to matter. Of course, no minister.

who is in his sober senses, would think of involving these simple creatures in the perplexing questions of polemical theology. The ideas may and should be such as are proper to be presented to another assembly of moderately informed persons, viz :—the great cardinal doctrines of Christianity, and the plain duties naturally deducible from these doctrines ; the words, however, should be such as they can readily comprehend.

Observe, I say, such as they "*can comprehend*," and in this I by no means wish to be understood to mean such as "*they use*." I have seen a very intelligent minister fail utterly to interest a congregation of blacks, and even excite disgust, by attempting to speak to them in what is called "negro language." Negroes may use such words as "*massa*" and "*buckra*," but, at the same time, they are shrewd enough to know that a white man ought to speak better, even though it be in apparent condescension to them ; and, with regard to childish or frivolous thoughts, congregations of sensible negroes can no more be interested in such things than you or I.

Let masters, then, spurn the idea, that any thing that can, by a stretch of liberality, be called preaching, will do for negroes, or that young and inexperienced preachers can be employed to preach to them, by way of learning to preach ;—such sentiments violate the very first dictates of common sense ; for, does not common sense say, that if a doctrine or duty is to be made intelligible to an obscure intellect, the light thrown upon that doctrine, or duty should be clearer and stronger, in proportion to the darkness of the mind into which such

truth is to be conveyed? Get the best; it may, like the quaker's coat, cost higher, but then it will last. Some things I might get, because of cheapness; but others, such as garden seeds, physic, teaching and preaching, I must have good, or not at all.

Concerning their church relations, it is unquestionably better for them to stand connected with white congregations, where they can be under the supervision and tuition of those better informed than themselves. Many of them can be rendered highly efficient as "*watchmen*," or "*leaders*;" but it is exceedingly rare to find a colored man who can, for a length of time, maintain his position as a pastor; and, moreover, the instructions of such a man are not adequate to their wants; they need the plainest and most wholesome instruction, combined with a fair proportion of fervent exhortation. Their own preachers are apt, in the absence of an ability to teach, to seek to inflame them by the most impassioned appeals, without a proper substratum of wholesome doctrine, upon which to predicate such exhortations.

Having thus expressed my views, as to the general character and style of the religious instruction that, in my judgment, they need—should have; (and, if I have not made an egregious blunder, in understanding both the Scriptures and common sense, THEY HAVE A RIGHT to;) I shall proceed to develope a system, by which their religious instruction might be carried on, from their very earliest years. Negro children are capable of receiving much religious instruction, even without the aid of books, except a single copy, for the use of the

teacher, of whatever book may be employed. All that is requisite, is, that suitable pains be taken to instruct them. The experiment to teach them orally, would convince any one of their capacity to receive instruction in that manner. As an illustration, I will state the result of an experiment in my own family, and the manner of conducting that experiment. Having, at a particular time, but a single copy of a certain catechism, which I wished to teach to the children of my family, consisting of several little girls, from eight to twelve years of age, I was laid under the necessity of instructing them orally. A little servant girl, about the average age of the children, was required to be present, and to take part in the exercises ; and, so far as could be perceived, there was no material difference, if any, between the progress of the white children over the black one.

As the manner of conducting the experiment might be of interest, I will give it somewhat in detail. Having this class before me, and perfect silence and attention being secured, I commenced by pronouncing deliberately, and with the utmost distinctness, the first question, and its answer, which (i. e. the answer) I required them to repeat in concert, some three or four times, or until it was thoroughly memorized. I then proceeded to the next question and answer, in the same manner, until it also was memorized ; I then repeated the two questions and answers together, until they were able to recite both answers together. In this manner, I proceeded through a short lesson, repeating the entire series as often as I added one. At the next recitation, the first lesson was

reviewed (lest it might have been forgotten) before a new lesson was entered upon, and so on through the entire book. When the lesson is memorized, an important and very agreeable exercise is, to ask such simple questions, as would evince the extent to which it is understood, or to afford a suitable vehicle for communicating proper views; otherwise they may be satisfied merely to repeat the words, without a proper comprehension of their import.

Not only the Catechism, but selections from the Scriptures—as the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, and other Discourses of our Lord, together with Hymns, short religious narratives, &c.,—might, in this manner, be communicated to them from week to week, in an easy and agreeable manner, provided any one “*cared for their souls*,” which instruction would, in the course of the year, amount to a considerable stock of religious knowledge, and which might, in after life, become a perfect treasure to those uncultivated children.

As an illustration of what principles might be thus impressed upon their minds, let us suppose the story of Hagar in the wilderness to be taught, and the single sentiment, “*Thou, God, seest me*,” to be indelibly impressed upon the minds of the whole class, or even a single member,—who I ask, can estimate the effects of that one truth, in deterring from crime, and impelling to virtue, through all future life?

I am satisfied that any thing like a fair experiment, (by which I mean this, or any other tolerably good plan,

persisted in,) will convince any one of the following truths :—

First. That short lessons, orally communicated, and conducted in a sprightly and animated manner, with frequent questions, to keep up attention, are not only very profitable, but also may be made very agreeable and attractive to children, both white and black.

Secondly. That black children learn, in this manner, with but little, if any, less ease and facility than whites.

One portion of this system, that will commend it greatly to the minds of many, consists in the fact, that the instruction can, to a considerable extent, be communicated by our own children, and, in many instances, with as much or more success, than by ourselves. An intelligent little miss, of fourteen or sixteen, by the aid of a few attractive ways, may gather around her the black children, on a farm, every Sunday afternoon ;—and thus, whilst really benefiting herself, perhaps, as much or more than any one else, by the mental and spiritual exercise necessary to the work, may be imparting knowledge, which, through divine grace, may, in after life, result in the salvation of many of her youthful flock.*

One of the happy results of such a work as this, which requires a distinct notice, is the kind feelings en-

* I am aware that some of our young misses, of sixteen or fourteen, or even of twelve, would turn up their pretty little noses at such a suggestion ; but I know, too, that such delicately raised young ones, have the same scorn of any other thing useful ; but, that they are adding to their respectability by feelings like these, I think there is much reason to doubt.

gendered, not only between the children, black and white, but also between the entire family, black and white.

In this, also, I speak from experience,—for well do I remember, when more than twenty years ago, that I, then a youth, in my native town, undertook and conducted, for a length of time, a Sabbath school, of some sixty or seventy colored children, with precisely such results as I have mentioned, viz:—endearing to myself not only the children, but their parents, and the black population generally.

Before concluding this description, I beg leave to remark, that any one who chooses to try an experiment like this, will soon discover that a class of fifty, or even a hundred, can be taught with nearly the same facility as a class of ten or twenty; all that is requisite being that perfect order be preserved, and that the children answer together, and in concert,—a thing they learn in a few lessons, and of which they soon become fond. I have found myself greatly assisted by the presence and co-operation of two or three judicious old men, to assist in keeping order. I would further suggest, that when a suitable room can be provided, the older servants, especially parents, should be induced to attend; they would, thereby, be spectators, and hearing and understanding the subjects upon which the children are instructed on the Sabbath, would be able to co-operate in endeavoring to impress these lessons upon them during the week. That a suitable room can always be found upon a well regulated farm, I am assured, by a remark of yours in

reference to the dining room of your friend and neighbor, Mr. M——, viz :—that the dining room, on the farm of Mr. M——, served also as a chapel. Where a more suitable place could not be found, this would be admirable ; and it would not be the first time I have known a “*tavern*” used for such purposes, or a tavern bell used to call people to the worship of God. This, in addition to its use as a place of assemblage, on the Lord’s day, might serve a valuable purpose as a place for a kind of family worship. There is, on almost every farm, one or more religious men, who might get the people together, and sing and pray, and thus, by a solemn act of religious worship, commend themselves to the protection of the Almighty during the hours of repose. This, in conjunction with the practice of requiring all lights to be out at nine o’clock, would do much towards correcting the vicious habit of many blacks, in keeping late hours, and, thereby, disqualifying themselves for the labors of the ensuing day. Masters are, doubtless, to blame for some of this practice of keeping late hours, when the servants are employed about feeding, and other matters of a similar character, until eight or nine o’clock, leaving little or no time for such things as belong to the comfort of the servants themselves.

I would further urge, upon their parents, the necessity of teaching and training them regularly to kneel and repeat the Lord’s Prayer, or some other short and appropriate address to the throne of grace.

A modification of this system might answer for the larger children, and connected with singing, prayer, and

mutual exhortation, would serve well even for the adults. The propriety of adapting it to the adults will appear, when we consider their remarkable fondness for religious songs, already referred to, and bear in mind how very slender is their stock of such songs. This accounts for their singing choruses with so much spirit, they being, comparatively, easy to memorize.

Considering, then, the very small amount of trouble or expense necessary to instruct these poor creatures;—that it can be done, so far as the younger children are concerned, by one's own children, and that, too, no less to the benefit of the white than the black child;—I cannot see how any master, who has the least sense of the value of a religious education to his own children, can satisfy himself, in neglecting some such means for training his young servants. Indeed, I am persuaded, that if a man were destitute of every feeling of benevolence, or any just sense of his moral obligations to his servants, an enlightened self-interest would afford abundant grounds why he should undertake some such means for the moral elevation of his people. He might do it, even in self-defence, if for no other reason. The petty vices and immoralities of the young, white or black, are no small sources of vexation and annoyance, and constitute a considerable drawback from the sum total of happiness in the family. Now, on the supposition, that by spending from one to two hours each Sabbath afternoon, in the manner described, we succeed in checking these sources of vexation one half or one-third, it is plainly a profitable expenditure of time, if no other re-

sults did ever accrue. But is that supposition at all within the range of reasonable probability? The entrance of God's word giveth light, is a divine sentiment, the truth of which has been attested by thousands; and truths thus engraven upon the young mind, whether through the agency of the Scriptures, the Catechism, Hymns, or Religious Narrative, may be as bread cast upon the water, which shall be gathered after many days.

Many of these operations, you will perceive, suppose not only a considerable amount of attention from the master, but also the visits and co-operation of a minister. As an incentive to the former, viz., the master's attention, I will avail myself of one of your own remarks, viz:—" *That a man's servants will not long continue to be his, unless he is willing, in some sense, also to belong to them;*" and it is further perfectly obvious, that if such operations are to be carried on successfully, a minister ought to be provided; and, upon the broad principle that the laborer is to be a partaker of the fruits, and as masters partake so largely of their carnal things, viz., the fruits of their industry, it is obviously a dictate of humanity, not to say of religion, to repay them with spiritual things. What master, possessing a spark of humanity, would refuse to pay, out of the proceeds of the labor of his servants, a reasonable amount for religious instruction, to be bestowed upon those servants? Some non-professors would make many of our church members blush crimson, by their example in this matter. I have (at this moment) in mind a gen-

tleman, who, I do not suppose, recognizes himself, or is recognized by others, as a converted man; but it has fallen to my lot to know of his liberality in this matter on several occasions, to ministers, whose preaching he himself seldom or never hears. One of them, I am sure, he never does hear himself; and yet, because his blacks have it in their power to hear him, the master voluntarily contributes to the support of their minister.

And now, my dear beloved brother, allow me, in a few words, to impress the importance of these duties upon you. The master's station is one of responsibility. I have no doubts, as I before remarked, concerning the moral rectitude of slaveholding; but I have very serious doubts of many masters being able to make a good account of the manner in which they have discharged their duties to their slaves.

Our laws, my dear brother, place a barrier in the way of the negro learning to read, and thus being able to learn the nature of his moral and religious obligations, by studying for himself the inspired volume. You have accepted and continue the ownership of these slaves, knowing these facts, and acceding to these conditions. You, and every other right-minded man, would scorn the absurd position, that they are not moral agents like others; we are all assured that they have moral and religious duties, growing out of their relations to each

other and their Creator, just as other men, and women, and children.

Now we know of no other modes of instruction than oral and written ; the laws forbid the latter ; you, and all law-abiding men, sympathize with the law in this respect, just so long as it is law ; the conclusion then is, if they are to be instructed, it must be done orally. If they are ever to come to a knowledge of the great truths of religion, so as to be savingly benefited thereby, it must be by being instructed orally.

Again—if they are to be instructed at all, it must be of your procuring. Who will take upon himself the responsibility of teaching your servants, and who would you allow to do it, unless by your consent previously obtained ? You have then a responsibility to these people, which, as it is or is not discharged, will result in incalculable good or evil to them, and may I not say to yourself also ; and, bear in mind, my brother, that, in addition to all the weighty considerations which might be adduced in favor of oral instruction, this is the crowning one, "*It is God's own appointment.*" Let it be borne in mind, that God has ordained, by preaching, to save them that believe. And, furthermore, let it be well remembered, that the wisdom of this arrangement has been attested in all time ; in that it has been the great, almost the sole agency, in spreading the triumphs of christianity, and filling heaven with that innumerable multitude, which no man can number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues.

I trust that fraternal solicitude will not betray me into

saying too much, or speaking too plainly ; but, as the subject is now before our minds in its strongest form, and as this correspondence is about to close, I beg leave to say, what I do say, out of the fullness of a brother's loving heart. God only knows the anxiety I feel on account of many masters in regard to this matter. The institution is upon us, and we must make the best use of the circumstances. I, therefore, beg you, as you value the immortal soul of your servant, or yourself, be not, by any remissness in these duties, accessory to their eternal ruin.

Remember, dear brother, that "*the fashion of this world passeth away.*" The time is short, when the relations of men must all be changed ; when men must stand before the great Judge of All ; not as invested with those offices growing out of mere incidental circumstances, but each in his true character. All this parade and show is nothing but a pageant, or a dramatic exhibition ; soon the curtain must fall, and we shall assume our true characters. Then will we feel the force of that sentiment—

“ Honor and shame from no conditions rise ;
Act well your part, there all the honor lies ; ”

Then we shall see and understand that all true, all real honor, arises not from having been a master, a king, or any thing else, but from having performed our moral and religious, our social and civil duties, in such a manner as to commend ourselves to the GREAT JUDGE OF ALL.

Then, too, we shall understand that there is no shame in having been a slave in this world, but that the poor black man, who, amidst ignorance and obstacles of various kinds, endeavored to discharge his moral and religious duties, in the fear of God, not as a mere man pleaser, but in singleness of heart, as fearing God, shall have his head lifted high, among angels and archangels, the elder spirits of the world of glory.

I have said the master has fearful responsibilities ; he has, too, a glorious opportunity of being made the instrument of salvation to his people. The servants of a good master delight to look upon him, as a paragon of excellence ; and if he is devotedly and truly a pious man, he may be the means of forming their characters for heaven.

Yours, in great affection,

WILLIAM R. MELVILLE.

Melville Cottage, ——— — 1850.

MY MUCH ESTEEMED AND BELOVED BROTHER,—

YOUR exhibition of the duties of masters, and especially your application of it to me, has had the effect of rendering me much dissatisfied with myself. The beautiful illusion which I had succeeded in throwing around myself is gone, and with it a large proportion of my self-complacency ; and, yet, can I, dare I, say that my brother has done wrong, in drawing me into this discussion, or that I have acted unwisely in allowing myself to

be drawn into it? Would I, if I could, bring back that false view, which, like a baseless vision, was the unreal foundation upon which my self-satisfaction in this matter rested. 'Tis true my ignorance was bliss, but is it folly to be wise? No! I answer, emphatically, no! I see, most clearly, that all that I have been doing, as you most correctly remark, overlooks the important thought that they have souls. I have, up to this time, in all my excellent planning and arranging for them, considered them as merely physical or animal beings.—Creatures, whose sole business on earth, is to inquire what shall we eat? what shall we drink? and wherewith shall we be clothed? I have not acted from selfishness, for I know I am not selfish; but I plainly discover that all that I am doing, I might have done from that unworthy motive. I see, too, as I believe, *why* I have acted thus in reference to my servants. As mortifying as the confession is, I am compelled to say that I have, up to this period, treated myself, my wife, and my children, no better than I have my servants. I have sought to make all happy around me, so far as the comforts of this life are concerned, but I see now that I have not, in reference to myself, or those dearer to me than my own life, even considered the wants of their immortal souls.

The duties you urge appear, all of them, to be reasonable and practicable; but, yet, how I shall perform them, I know not. I will seek direction from heaven, and undertake to discharge, to the best of my ability, those important duties. And, now, I earnestly ask you what I

have never asked before, but which, I feel assured, you will do : pray the Almighty God on my behalf, that I and my whole family, white and black, may so live as to meet at last in heaven.

With every sentiment of fraternal regard,

I am, your affectionate brother,

JOSEPH L. MELVILLE.

ESSAY.

THE DUTIES
OF
CHRISTIAN MASTERS.

BY
REV. A. T. HOLMES,
Of Hayneville, Houston Co., Geo.

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ESSAY.

THE DUTIES OF CHRISTIAN MASTERS.

BY REV. A. T. HOLMES,

Hayneville, Houston County, Georgia.

WHEN, at the formation of Eve, the God of the Universe declared, that it was not good for man to be alone, the importance of the social principle was fully recognized, and man became a social being. Founded upon the union thus originally instituted, certain relations are discovered to exist, in which are involved certain duties, each relation urging its claim respectively. Thus, the husband sustains a relation to his wife, the parent to his child, the citizen to his country, in each of which distinctive duties are to be discharged, growing out of the particular relation thus sustained. Among other relations which he sustains, *man is master*; and in this, as in all others, certain duties are involved. These relations are, all, of Divine appointment, (that between master and servant as positively as any other,) and, therefore, the duties which are involved, are all of Divine requirement. Every duty is a command, and God must be regarded as commanding the master to perform those

duties to his servants, which the relation he bears to them involves and imposes.

If the position assumed in the preceding proposition is correct, and, surely, the proposition itself may be regarded as self-evident, then is it of great moment, that all the duties involved should be ascertained, as far as practicable, with special reference to their proper observance and their faithful discharge. Our present purpose is to inquire into the duties of *masters*, and, especially, of *Christian masters*, according to the word of God.

The Apostle, Paul, in writing to the Ephesian Church, (Eph. vi., 5-8,) exhorts servants to obedience. They are admonished, that *cheerful* obedience is the will of God, and are assured that He, himself, will secure the recompense, in regard to whatsoever good thing a man doeth, whether bond or free, it being done as unto the Lord, and not unto men. An act performed, whether by master or servant, from a sense of duty, God's authority and God's favor being properly recognized, cannot fail of its reward. Having been thus explicit in his direction and encouragement to servants, the Apostle calls upon masters to "do the same things (v. 9) unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that their master, also, is in Heaven, and that there is no respect of persons with him." To do the same things, may be understood to cherish the same spirit of kindness and fidelity, to act in the same conscientious manner, and to have respect to the same recompense of reward. To forbear threatening, is to guard against a fretful, dissatisfied temper, and to resist a disposition to govern by terror

rather than by love. The mutual obligations, here enjoined, seem limited by the law of Christ, and the law of Christ is the law of kindness and good will. Such a spirit should be cultivated between master and servant, but, especially, on the part of the master, in view of the distinction, in his favor, which exists. But the law of Christ contemplates a wise and judicious exercise of kindness, and imposes the necessity of that wholesome discipline, which secures, in its result, the happiness of all concerned. Now, as the servant's obedience, if rendered in a sullen, reluctant spirit, and prompted only by the fear of punishment, cannot be *good-will* service, as to the Lord, so the exercise of right and authority, on the part of the master, with reference only to his interest, uninfluenced by kindness to his servant, and desire for his good, must incur the displeasure of Him with whom there is no respect of persons. A master *may* move among his servants, as a father among his children. He *can* impress the conviction upon them that he is concerned for their comfort and welfare, and that he aims to secure their confidence and affection. His presence need not be a terror, but to them that do evil, because he has it in his power to satisfy them that his domestic policy is based upon the principle, that virtue must be encouraged and vice restrained. The necessary amount of labor can be, consistently, required, and all insubordination discountenanced, because labor is requisite to the support of all, and strict discipline essential to the peace and well-being of all. Such a spirit moves to action, not from passion or impulse, but from principle,

and requires service and subordination from the servant, as from a *fellow being*, sustaining an humble relation to the master, but presenting claims upon his kindness and faithfulness which he may not disregard. The Christian master, in pursuing such a course, acts in the fear of God, discharges his trust in singleness of heart, and contemplates the end, as one who, knowing that he has a master in Heaven, would be prepared to render a satisfactory account of his stewardship. Not so with him who disregards the Divine instruction, and does not realize the obligation which his station imposes. Threatening, abuse, avowed suspicion, hasty and unjust charges, and, too often, severe punishment, in anger, or prompted by vindictive motives, mark the intercourse between master and servant. No regard is manifested for the feelings of the servant, and no effort is made to induce his confidence and affection. The look of kindness never beams in the master's eye, the note of kindness is never heard in his voice, and the mortifying conviction is forced upon him, that the master entertains no feeling for him but such as may be excited by his interest in him as his property. True, he feeds him, shelters him, and attends to him in sickness; but all this he does to his mule or his ox, and, seemingly, influenced by no better motives in the one case than in the other. Can it be rung too loudly in the ears of such, ye, also, have a master in Heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him?

The same Apostle, in another letter, (Col. iv. 1,) calls upon masters to give unto their servants that which is "*just and equal*," the consideration being urged, that

they have a master in heaven. In pursuing the investigation, as to the Christian master's duty, we may learn something from the use of the terms, "*just and equal*," as we find them in the Scripture referred to. Justice, in a restricted, legal sense, is almost universally observed among masters; but when a master has given that which is "*just*" to his servant, has he done his duty? Has he met the Divine requirement? Or, is there something more required than what the law simply specifies? The answer is plain—equity, as well as justice, should regulate all our intercourse with others, nor does the relation of master and servant constitute an exception. Masters, give unto your *servants* that which is "*just and equal*," for God hath shewed you what is good; and what doth the Lord require of you but to do justly, and to *love mercy*, and to walk humbly with thy God? (Micah, vi, 8.) As justice and equity appear to be the Divine requirement in the master's conduct towards his servant, (and concurrence in this interpretation is almost universal,) we shall be much assisted in determining what is the Christian master's duty, by ascertaining what is to be understood by these respective terms. Let the distinction be noticed. *The laws of society* constitute the foundation of justice. That is right, which those laws recognize as right, and therefore the decisions of justice must be according to them. Equity has for its foundation *the laws of nature*. The law of justice is a written rule of life, binding its subjects to strict conformity in all their conclusions:—the law of equity dwells in the heart, is regulated by circumstances, and determines ac-

cording to its convictions of right and wrong. The decisions of justice respect the rights of property ;—the decisions of equity, those of humanity. The obligations of justice are imperative ; civil jurisdiction enforces the observance of its laws, and inflicts punishment upon the transgressor :—the obligations of equity are moral in their character, conscience dictates the observance of its laws, and the Divine displeasure attends their violation. Now, let the distinction be applied. Masters, in “*giving to servants*,” are to be governed by the laws of justice, but they are to be governed, also, by the laws of equity. Justice recognizes the master’s right in his servant as property, and prescribes certain laws to which he must conform in his use of that property ; and the master is just, according as he respects those laws. Equity pleads the right of humanity, is not limited by the strict requirement of the law, and, in the conscientious discharge of duty, prompts the master to such treatment of his servant as would be desired, on his part, were their positions reversed. The master gives that which is “*just*” to his servant, when he acts towards him in strict accordance with legal requirement ; he respects that law, the penalty of which is enforced at some civil tribunal ; but he gives him that which is “*equal*,” when his conduct is directed by his consciousness of right and wrong ; when he realizes the moral obligation imposed, and remembers, with humble reverence and with Godly fear, that he, also, has a master in Heaven.

Thus, in the eye of the law, the master may be “*just*” while he requires a certain amount of labor ; but, in that

requirement, conscience may be disregarded, right may be violated, and humanity may be outraged. Thus, also, in regard to food, and raiment, and rest. Justice feeds and clothes, according to law ; but equity provides, according to the claims of nature, the suggestions of right, the impulses of kindness, and a proper regard for the Divine approbation. Masters, give unto your servants that which is "just and equal," and forget not that there is a tribunal before which master and servant must stand, when all earthly distinctions will have ceased forever. In full view of this solemn truth, when justice puts the servant to work, let equity prescribe the task ; when justice would measure his meat or weigh his pork, let equity fill the measure and hold the scales ; when justice would provide his clothing, let equity determine as to the quality and quantity ; and when justice would build his house, let equity arrange for its comfort and convenience. It is true, that where the claims of equity are thus respected, the annual nett proceeds must be diminished to some inconsiderable extent ; but, where is the master who will not feel himself amply compensated in the contentment, cheerfulness and comfortable condition of his servants, secured at a sacrifice so small, and in a manner so reasonable and consistent ?

Macknight, in his exposition of the Scripture which we are now considering, expresses an opinion, which, though to some extent gratuitous, may be regarded as important, from the fact that a duty is urged, which on the part of masters generally, does not seem to command proper attention. His opinion is, that the service of a

whole life, according to strict justice, demands fit maintenance for that whole life ; and that equity requires that the most faithful among servants should be distinguished by particular rewards. What may be the correctness of this criticism, need not, now, be argued ; but the duty of making a distinction between faithful and unfaithful servants, all will admit. The rule of conduct in this case, must be that which is observed by the great Master of us all. He makes a difference between him that serves him and him that serves him not, and a public exhibition of that difference will be made, for, in that day when God shall “make up his jewels,” men shall discern between the righteous and the wicked. When, on the one hand, it is said, “well done, good and faithful servant ;” and, on the other, “out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant ;” the principle, involved in this distinction, is clearly recognized, and is, consequently, established as the rule of conduct in all subordinate relations. The Christian master, therefore, should be known among his servants as frowning, uniformly upon vice, and smiling upon virtue ; as approving that which is right, because it is right, and condemning that which is wrong, because it is wrong, and as exercising his authority, both in rewards and punishments, with that respect for right which will, directly, tend to improve the moral condition of his servants. This is the master’s duty ; it constitutes an important part of his personal responsibility, and, in the account which will be required of his stewardship, much of his “joy” or “grief” will be found connected with his faith-

fulness or neglect. How careful, then, should the master be, to convince his servant that while he will, certainly, be punished in some form, for neglect or carelessness in his daily work, for disregard of his authority, for theft, or for any thing else, which may affect his interest unfavorably, so, also, will he certainly be punished, in some proper form, for falsehood, profane language, Sabbath violation, or any thing else, which amounts to an act positively immoral, and, therefore, displeasing to God, and hurtful to the spiritual interest of the servant himself. I dread the self-condemnation of that Christian master, whose servants have never felt the force of his example and authority in encouraging moral propriety, and in reproof and suppressing that which was offensive in the sight of God. Masters, give unto your servants that which is "*just and equal*," and, in order that this may be properly done, establish among them a mild and uniform system of discipline, having respect to impropriety of every sort. Be careful to satisfy them that motives of duty and benevolence prompt you to a strict observance of this system, and let it distinctly appear that your rewards and punishments have respect, not only to their increased value as *property*, but, also, to their improvement in moral worth. I know Abraham, said the Lord, that he will command his children and his *household* after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment. That which in Abraham received the Divine favor, will obtain a similar acknowledgment in every other instance; and that which Abraham discharged, as a solemn duty, rests with

equal force upon every Christian master. Let it not be forgotten, that we, also, have a master in Heaven, and that in regard to duties devolving upon us in the several relations which we sustain, He is no respecter of persons.

In connection with the Divine instruction which has been considered, may be noticed, here, Job's vindication of his integrity against the false charges of Eliphaz. "If I did despise the cause of my man servant, or of my maid servant, when they contended with me ; what, then, shall I do, when God riseth up ? And when he visiteth, what shall I answer him ? Did not he that made me in the womb, make him ? And did not one fashion us in the womb ?" (Job, xxxi, 13-15.) In this just and necessary protest, Job evidently understands both the duty and responsibility involved in the relation which he sustained to his servants. A master himself, he remembered that he, also, had a master, with whom there was no respect of persons, and whose approbation was secured, not by the station occupied, but by the faithfulness of him who occupied that station, whether master or servant. Did not He that made me, make him ?

When Job speaks of his servants contending with him, he is to be understood as referring to accusations made against them, which they denied ; or to offences committed by them, which they attempted to excuse or justify ; or to complaints which they urged, because of hardships imposed upon them. The "cause" of his servant, in either case specified, or in any case involving a just claim or an equitable demand, *he did not despise.*

The servant was permitted to speak, and an opportunity afforded to prove the accusation false. His acknowledgment of the offence, his regret for it, and any palliating fact which he might urge in connection, were all heard with kindness, and received proper consideration. The cause of complaint was examined, and if found sufficient, proper measures were taken for its removal. He did not brow-beat them, nor, in the haughty, tyrannical exercise of his power, refuse to hear their excuse or attend to their complaints, nor did he take their guilt *for granted*, without proper investigation. This he might have done, and have been regarded, in consequence, as a good manager, an excellent disciplinarian, a man who knew well how to keep his servants in subjection ; but this he might *not* have done, with any hope of the favor of that God who made them both, and who requires of the master that he give to his servant that which is just and equal. For, let it be remembered, that Job was now repelling unjust charges ; in defence of his character, he was pleading before the tribunal of a righteous God, and clearly intimates that a proper regard for the cause of his servant, as well as an upright conduct in other respects, was by him considered essential, in order that he might avoid that condemnation which he was supposed, justly, to have incurred. And, let it be further remembered, that among Job's numerous servants, many were rebellious, undutiful and unfaithful, and held both him and his cause in contempt. Yet *their* cause he did not despise, nor did he find any excuse for the neglect of duty, or any extenuation of his injustice and cruelty in

the improper conduct of those who sustained to him the humble relation of servants, subject to his authority, and having no appeal from that authority but to Him who is no respecter of persons. How are masters, and especially Christian masters, admonished by this scrupulous adherence to right on the part of Job? While he was a law-abiding man, evidently, and respected the institutions of society and government, he regarded the requirement and approbation of God as paramount in their importance. Not satisfied to act as the law of the land directed, he was conscientious to observe the law of God. Not content to render justice, where justice could be demanded, he was careful to obey its dictates, when naught but a sense of right prompted him to action; and when the case of the widow and fatherless was brought before him, the necessity of the poor, the claim of his neighbor, or *the cause of his servant*, he recognized but one law to govern his conduct. That law was the law of right, the *law of God*. To this he submitted every action, and by this was he regulated in every decision; and, in the spirit of the Apostle, "labored," in prosperity and adversity, in life and in death, to be "accepted" of God, believing, that in all nations, he that feareth God, and worketh the righteousness, is accepted of him.

Having, thus far, considered and urged the plain Scriptural direction respecting the duties of Christian masters, and, truly, a Christian master's duty is every master's duty, it is proposed to infer, from the views presented, some general and some special duties, which

cannot be neglected, without doing violence to all the principles involved. These duties are, of course, more or less binding, according to the circumstances of the master, for God's requirements are according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not. In regard to this, Paul's rule is a good one: "Herein do I exercise myself, to have a conscience void of offence."

We infer, first, that the master should be the *friend* of his servant, and that the servant should know it. Friendship implies good will, kindness, a desire for the welfare of him for whom it is entertained. Thus should the master feel towards his servant, and in the cultivation of this spirit and its decided manifestation, there need be no compromise of authority, no undue familiarity. The servant, under such a master, knows his condition, and understands that, while he is restricted to certain privileges and required to perform certain duties, he is not held in subjection by an unfeeling tyrant, nor driven to his work by a heartless oppressor. A kind word, a pleasant look, a little arrangement for his comfort, assures him that there is one who cares for him; and, notwithstanding he goes forth to his daily labor, and toils at his daily task, his heart is light, his song is cheerful, and he seeks his humble couch at night, in the happy consciousness that his *master is his friend*. Such is the enviable lot of many servants in our "*sunny South*," and on such plantations as feel the controlling influence of the master's friendship for his servants, it may be noticed, as a general fact, that order is observed, peace is cultivated, mutual confidence and good will are

encouraged, as much work is done as ought to be done, the sound of the lash is but seldom heard, and the *runaway's* punishment is but rarely inflicted. And yet, the *friend* becomes not the *companion*, and the effort on the part of the master to secure confidence and affection, affords no warrant for improper familiarity. The kind word and the pleasant look, are still the word and look of the master, and the little arrangements which are made for the servant's comfort, are made in full recognition of the relative positions occupied, and produce, on his part, the grateful conviction that he is not regarded simply as property, but as a fellow being for whom feelings of kindness are cherished, and for whose happiness a proper desire is entertained.

Again, we infer, that the master should be the *protector* of his servant. The relation which they sustain to each other, is that of superior and inferior, and while occasional circumstances may require that the master defend or vindicate his servant, the obligations of every day call for his *protection*. The servant should *feel* that the superior wisdom, experience, power and authority of his master, constitute his abiding security. He should be encouraged to rely upon their certain and constant exercise, so that in regard to necessity, comfort, personal difficulty or danger, he may, confidently, look to his master for that protection which his particular case may demand. It is the master's duty that such an understanding be established between himself and his servant. In view of the servant's condition, it is both "*just and equal*," and will contribute much towards securing that

peace and mutual confidence which every good man loves to contemplate as the striking characteristic of his own family and household. Moreover, it will advance the master's interest, for, while no right is yielded, and no improper indulgence granted; while no authority is compromised, and no undue liberty allowed; at the same time, the servant learns to value his protection, loves his master, is attached to his home, and therefore less inclined to rove, dreads no separation from his family if he has one, and attends to his daily work, comparatively free from care and anxiety, and rejoicing in the assurance that, in his master, he has a kind, watchful and considerate protector.

Once more, we infer that the master should be the *guide* of his servant. In the duty here specified, reference is had, not only to the influence which the master is supposed to have over the movements or actions of his servant, but, also, to the superior intelligence of the master.

There is no relation, perhaps, unless it is that between father and son, in which a more decided influence is exerted, than that which exists between the master and his servant. Ordinary conduct and conversation are observed, manner is marked, habits are noticed, and, according as the master regulates his life by principles of right, his servant is influenced for good or for evil. The master may be a profane man, or a Sabbath breaker, or a drinker of ardent spirits—a licentious man in some positive sense—and, almost invariably, will his licentious course be acted out by those who are con-

trolled, as well by his influence and example, as by his authority. That master speaks and acts thus, is not only a sufficient warrant with many servants, but, actually, a reason why they should speak and act thus themselves. And, are we accountable for the influence which we exert upon others? Will our common master in Heaven hold us responsible not only for the evil which we commit ourselves, but for that which we induce others to commit? Is there danger that I shall be confounded in the presence of the great Judge of all, and *doubly confounded*, because, daring myself to profane the name of God, my servant feels at liberty to do the same? Masters! Christian masters! what manner of persons ought ye to be! Twenty, fifty, perhaps an hundred immortal, accountable beings look up to you, respectively; they watch your movements, they note your example, and they, almost literally, follow your guidance, as the traveller follows his guide through some unknown region. Whither does your influence lead them? In following your example, what prospect have they for peace with God beyond the grave? To what extent are they encouraged to pursue the right and avoid the wrong, by their regard for your good opinion, and their conviction that it can only be obtained by a correct and upright course of conduct? How pleasant must be the consciousness of that master, who contemplating his relation to his servants, feels, that while they labor for his benefit, submit to his authority, and conform to his regulations, they, also, regard him as their friend, appeal to him as their protector, and trust to his superior intel-

ligence for direction? and, that while they follow his example, and live under his influence, they are preparing for the joys and employments of that better world, where master and servant will find that with God there is no respect of persons, and that he only distinguishes between “him that serves him and him that serves him not.”

We infer, lastly, that the master should be the *teacher* of his servant. Ignorance, in a peculiar sense, attaches to the negro, and ignorance, says Dr. Dick, is one principal cause of the want of virtue, and of the immoralities which abound in the world. The law of the land, sustained by public opinion, and justified in view of the causes which require its existence and enforcement, denies to the servant the opportunity for instruction which might, otherwise, be afforded. As a very natural consequence, the servant, independent of his constitutional tendency, is, more or less, credulous and superstitious. He is constantly exposed to error, and especially error in regard to religious matters. It devolves, therefore, upon the master, in the discharge of his duty, to have respect to the ignorant condition of his servant, for ignorant, credulous and superstitious as he is, at the same time he is an immortal and accountable being. Sooner or later, he must die, and be judged with righteous judgment. In that judgment will the master have no interest? Will he be allowed to witness it, and feel that its retributions, in no manner, concern him? Will his servants be destroyed for “lack of knowledge,” and conscience not remind him that he had neglected to teach them the way of truth? Will he not quail before the

glance of that eye, which, in the ignorance of the servant, detects the indifference and unfaithfulness of the master? Alas! in that awful, fearful hour, no longer affected by the false sanctions of worldly policy, common usages, and popular prejudice, and no longer influenced by the false suggestions of worldly interest, how will some masters speak aloud their self-condemnation, when they remember how little they did, if they did any thing at all, that their servants might receive that instruction which would make them wise unto eternal life! It is urged, therefore, as an imperious duty, that the master, the Christian master, be the teacher of his servant. But teach him what, it may be asked? Teach him how to read and write? Instruct him in those branches of learning taught in our schools and colleges? Make him acquainted with those matters of general interest which agitate and disturb the political world? We answer, no; but teach him that he is a *sinner*, and that the Lord Jesus Christ is the sinner's friend. Teach him the absolute necessity of repentance toward God, and faith in the crucified Redeemer. Teach him that he must deny himself all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present world. Let the light of your superior knowledge shine upon the darkness of his ignorance, and let his credulity and superstition yield to that simplicity and godly sincerity, which the holy religion of the Son of God secures to all, masters and servants, who are brought to feel its sanctifying and saving power. Christian master, enter the dark cabin of thy servant, and with the lamp of truth in

thy hand, light up his yet darker soul with the knowledge of him, whom to know is life eternal.

A few hints, in connection with the last inference, will close this essay.

The important duty of teaching our servants, cannot be performed, to much purpose, without special effort. An occasional attention to it, so as to keep on *tolerable* terms with conscience, will accomplish but little, and is *pitiful trifling*, where solemn results are pending. It should be manifest, that in communicating to them religious instruction, we are *in good earnest*, and that we are influenced by considerations no less solemn than our own accountability, and their temporal and eternal welfare. A certain time should be designated, to be devoted to this work, taken, not from their hours of *rest*, but from their hours of *labor*, and their attendance should be *required*.

The effort made to instruct our servants, should be *appropriate*. Some plan should be adopted suited to their capacity. "*Understandest thou what thou readest,*" is as important a question to the negro now, as it was to the Ethiopian eighteen hundred years ago. Questions should be asked, which will lead them to *think*, and encourage them to remember what they hear. Short portions of Divine truth should be read and explained, and their particular application to them urged with kindness and faithfulness. Let the master exercise his judgment, that his servants may be benefited by his wise arrangements for their spiritual well-being.

The effort should be a *persevering* one. So long as

the relation shall continue, so long will the duty be binding upon us. Besides, perseverance is necessary to success. Many things, doubtless, will occur to discourage us, but let us not be "weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." In no one particular is this exhortation of the Apostle more worthy of solemn consideration than in that which now occupies our attention. In this case, as in all others, the path of duty is the path of peace, of interest, and of safety, for He who has a right thus to speak, has promised that if we are faithful unto death, we shall receive a crown of life. The effort should be a prayerful one. The Divine blessing is essential to our success in every thing that we undertake. In praying with our servants and for them, we shall understand our duty more correctly; we shall be aided in making the most appropriate arrangements for the performance of that duty; we shall find our perseverance and self-denial encouraged and sustained in carrying out those arrangements, and shall be able, with humble confidence, to submit all to Him, whose prerogative it is to say, "*Well done, good and faithful servant.*"

And now, Christian masters, suffer the word of exhortation from one, who, like yourselves, sustains this important relation. Lift your eyes to the judgment seat of Christ, remember your stewardship, consider the eternal welfare of your servants, and determine for yourselves, whether it is the part of wisdom to neglect this duty, or to make the proper effort, in order that it may be properly discharged. Anticipate that trying hour, when

the smile or the frown of your Maker and your Judge will depend upon the developments of that "Book of Remembrance," wherein is registered your faithfulness or your neglect. Stand with your servants before His righteous throne, and let the convictions of that honest hour fix your purpose to meet the claims which your relation, as masters, imposes upon you. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Ecc. ix, 10.

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